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LECTURES

ON

THE NICENE CREED

CHRISTIANITY

IN RELATION TO

SCIENCE AND MORALS

A COURSE OF LECTURES DELIVERED IN
CATHEDRAL

ON

THE NICENE CREED

BY

MALCOLM MacCOLL, M.A.

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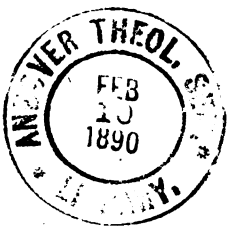

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PREFACE

A FEW words are needed to explain the imperfections in style and in other respects of the following Lectures. At the commencement of my term of residence at Ripon, in the beginning of this year, I was asked by some of the congregation who assemble in the Cathedral to give them a regular course of instruction on some points of Christian doctrine. I gladly agreed, and chose the Nicene Creed as a subject of exposition. Expecting only some forty or fifty persons to be present, I intended to give the instructions at my private residence. The number, however, who intimated their intention to attend was so large that I was obliged to meet them in the nave of the Cathedral. What was meant to be mere

informal and catechetical Instructions thus grew into a set of formal Lectures. They were delivered extempore, and were reported in several newspapers, thus reaching a much wider circle than those for whom they were originally intended. Letters have reached me from all parts of the kingdom, and also from the Continent, urging me to publish the Lectures in a volume. Some of these letters are from working men, and others from persons whose abilities and judgment command my respect. I have therefore corrected, and in some cases expanded, the reports of the Lectures which appeared in the press at the time. But they are reproduced here mostly as they were delivered, with the exception of the notes and nearly all the quotations; for I had hardly any books with me at Ripon to refer to. I am sure that whatever may be worth reading in the following pages is due to inspiration derived from books and conversations which I cannot now trace and acknowledge except in this general way. I am so

conscious of the many defects of style and reasoning which disfigure the Lectures, that I should not offer them to the public at all were it not for the many intimations that have reached me, especially from working men all over the country, that the Lectures would be useful to persons who have not leisure to study for themselves the questions with which I have dealt. The last Lecture was delivered in Ripon Cathedral in the summer of 1887, and is reproduced from a report of it at the time in the *Ripon Gazette.*

MALCOLM MACCOLL.

LONDON,
August, 1889.

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I.

"I BELIEVE IN ONE GOD."

OBJECTION TO CREEDS.

BEFORE we enter into any detailed examination of the Nicene Creed it may be well to consider an objection that meets us on the threshold. "Why," we sometimes hear it asked, "should we have creeds at all? Are they necessary? Are they not, on the contrary, mischievous—putting fetters on the mind and abridging the area of its free exercise? Are they not, in fact, a fence set up by artful theologians to bar access to the salubrious common of free thought in order to keep mankind in the bondage of priest-craft? Are not creeds the fruitful parents of divisions among Christians? And would not the abolition of creeds help to reunite the divided sects of Christendom into one family? Is not the Sermon on the Mount a sufficient rule of conduct?" Now undoubtedly it must be admitted that a creed is a fence, and that it does in a sense limit the exercise of private judgment. A creed deals in definitions,

and a definition implies boundaries. Let us look again at the illustration of a common. There was a time when the commons of England were all unfenced. People could roam over them without let or hindrance, no one forbidding them, and no fence to obstruct them. But in process of time men began to encroach upon the common land. A man here and a man there took a piece of land and fenced it round and appropriated it to his own use, and the common became smaller and smaller till at last it disappeared altogether; and the people at large were thus deprived of their common property. In this way a great many of the commons of England have been lost, to the great detriment of the population in general. And therefore, to prevent further depredations, it became necessary to put fences round commons that were in danger of spoliation; not, of course, for the purpose of narrowing their area, but in order to guard their latitude; not for the purpose of driving any one out who had a right to be in, but in order to guard the general freedom and enjoyment of all those to whom the common belonged.

There you see as in a parable the historical explanation of the formation of the creeds of Christendom. Doubtless it would have been a happier thing if the Church had been able to do without any formal

creed, and it was with pain and reluctance that she accepted the necessity which heresy forced upon her. Until the time of Arius there was no universal creed—nothing more than the baptismal formula, a short expression of belief in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. But Arius appeared upon the scene and began his war of negations and limitations. Not content with the prevalent belief in Jesus Christ as the only-begotten Son of God, he set himself to define, to deny, to circumscribe and diminish the common area of Christian belief. He argued that Jesus was not of the same substance with the Father, and when pushed dialectically into a corner, he boldly asserted that our Lord was "made of a substance which once was not," and therefore that "there was a time when He was not"—in other words, that He was a creature, though "the highest of the creatures." This was at once a denial of the doctrine of the Trinity and a return to the old Pagan idolatry, with all its degrading pollutions. For Arius paid the homage of divine worship to Christ while denying His essential and personal Godhead; which is idolatry. It is obvious, therefore, that Arianism was a narrowing process. It proposed to take away a large portion of the common heritage of Christendom and to build upon it a temple to idolatry.

How did the Church meet the Arian heresy? By expelling the trespasser and restoring the common to its rightful owners, the universal body of the people. And to prevent any further attempt at spoliation, the Church put a fence round the common, with a conspicuous notice to warn off intruders; in other words, it drew up the Nicene Creed and inserted into it a definition ("of the same substance with the Father") which effectually excluded Arianism. The creed was thus in its origin and purpose purely defensive—a rampart to guard the body of revealed truth for the use of the Christian community throughout the world. It is a mistake therefore to suppose that the Nicene Creed (and the observation applies to the other creeds) was intended to narrow the basis of the Church. The obvious purpose of such a symbol or passport of admission into a Church must be to include as many as possible; and this not so much by precise and logical statements of what the believer must profess, as by negativing statements which tend to break up the Church into a number of sects.[1] The Catholic

[1] "The Church's definitions with regard to the doctrine of the Trinity, from their origin and design, do not claim to be regarded as religio-philosophic and perfect explanations as to the nature of the Trinity, but as ecclesiastical and social protests against definite and matured degenerate forms—mutilations and caricatures of the doctrine of the Trinity: protests having their origin in historical circumstances."—Lange's *Positiv Dogmatik*, p. 136.

Church is necessarily more comprehensive than any community of men who dissent on particular grounds. The dogma of the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father, for example, comprehended as many as could be embraced within the terms of the Christian profession. It was the heterodox parties that commenced the war of limitations and sought by definitions to narrow the Church of Christ; whereas the orthodox party merely swept away these definitions and fenced the field of faith with counter-definitions to mark and protect its boundaries. Examine every heresy known to history, and you will find in every case that it has tried to narrow the field of belief, to cut off something from the common stock, to contract the circle of the Christian Faith. In truth, all sciences have their dogmas—that is, ultimate truths which the mind accepts at first on trust—on the authority of others—and afterwards proves to its own reason, if its knowledge and capacity enables it. Freedom of thought does not mean an unlimited right to accept any conclusion; it means liberty to work out the right conclusion. Freedom of thought is not restrained by the dogmas of mathematics; yet it would be an offence against reason to suppose that any problem of Euclid admits of more than one solution. A man may have a difficulty in solving a mathematical

problem for himself without doubting that there is a solution, and that a particular solution is the only true one. Difficulty and doubt are not the same thing; and freedom is opposed to force, not to mental certainty.[1] The most distinguished names in theology have also been remarkable for their intellectual fecundity, their power of impregnating the minds of successive generations with the seeds of great ideas which have borne fruit in their season and given a fresh impulse to the pursuit of truth. It will suffice to give as typical examples the names of Athanasius, Augustine, and our own Bishop Butler. Of course analogies merely suggest resemblance, not identity. The dogmas of theology are not, like the conclusions of the exact sciences, capable of mathematical demonstration. They rest mainly on probable evidence and have their strongest roots in the moral part of our nature. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." "If any man hath the will to do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God."

But is belief in the creed of Christendom necessary to salvation? Yes and no. The answer to that question depends upon what we mean by "necessary to

[1] See Mr. Gladstone's *State in its Relations with the Church*, 3rd edition, p. 162.

salvation." Is it, for example, necessary to eternal salvation that everybody in the Christian Church who hears the Athanasian Creed said, and who takes part in saying it, should have a clear intellectual apprehension of the words he hears or says? Certainly not. Very few people have a clear intellectual apprehension of any of the creeds. What is meant by saying that a right creed is necessary to salvation is this: that if we cherish erroneous conceptions of Almighty God, we shall form for ourselves a false type of character, in other words, a character unsuited to the society and occupations of heaven, because our character is moulded by the conceptions we form of the object of our love and worship. If you intended to leave this country and make your future home in a distant foreign land, you would naturally learn beforehand all you could about its climate, its productions, its inhabitants and sovereign—their language, laws, customs, character. But if through your own folly or carelessness your information on all these points was false; if the language differed from that which you had learnt, and the laws, customs, character of sovereign and people, as well as the climate and productions of the country, were quite contrary to what you had expected—do you not see that you would arrive in your future home very badly equipped

for the enjoyment of it? In that sense a right creed is necessary for salvation. But then the essence of right faith is a right direction of the will. Where the will is directed aright God makes allowance for any intellectual error; if the error is not wilful He does not hold us accountable for it. Now no mortal man can have a perfectly clear and complete apprehension of Almighty God. His existence and attributes are truths too vast and complex for any human mind to apprehend adequately, or any human language to express completely and accurately; and therefore all our creeds, all our prayers, all our discourses are at the best nothing more than approximations to what we believe to be the truth. But in so far as we direct our thoughts aright, in so far as we do our best to have right notions of Almighty God, in so far as we make the best use of the opportunities which He has placed within our reach, and we ourselves do not place any barrier in the way of believing and holding the truth, then God accepts the will for the deed. Let me refer you again to our Lord's own words: "If any man hath the will to do the will of God, he shall know the doctrine whether it be of God." That is to say that the essence of a right faith consists in a willing mind; where that is present God holds no man responsible for an error of genuine ignorance.

Therefore all that is really necessary in holding and reciting the creeds of the Church is that a man should, according to the best of his ability and opportunities, believe the words he uses in the general sense in which they have always been understood by the Christian Church. It is not necessary that he should have a perfectly accurate knowledge of the scientific language of theology. For example, in order to be a loyal subject of the Queen, it is not necessary that a man should have a complete mastery of the technical language of constitutional law, such as that "the king is immortal," "the king can do no wrong." All that is necessary is to have a loyal disposition, and to accept the language of constitutional law in its authoritative traditional sense.

So much as to creeds in general. Let us now come to particulars and consider the first article of the Creed: "I believe in one God." These words afford sufficient matter for reflection during the time at my disposal.

But we are met at starting by a preliminary objection. God, we are told, is "unknowable," and theology—that is, a science which professes to deal with "the unknowable"—is a contradiction in terms, since science implies knowledge. But what does the

Agnostic mean by pronouncing God to be "unknowable"? Not that nothing is or can be known about a Supreme Being, but that His nature cannot be comprehended. Mr. Herbert Spencer, who is one of the ablest and most candid of Agnostic teachers, writes as follows:—

"Respecting the nature of the universe, we seem committed to certain unavoidable conclusions. The objects and actions surrounding us, not less than the phenomena of our own consciousness, compel us to ask a cause; in our search for a cause we discover no resting-place until we arrive at the hypothesis of a First Cause; and we have no alternative but to regard this First Cause as Infinite and Absolute."[1]

And then Mr. Spencer goes on to argue that there can be no science concerning this First Cause, since he must remain for ever "inscrutable."

"If religion and science," he says, "are to be reconciled, the basis of reconciliation must be the deepest, widest, and most certain of all facts—that the Power which the universe manifests to us is utterly inscrutable."

He contrasts religion and science, you will observe, as two things which are separate and distinct, and asserts that they can never be reconciled except by

[1] *First Principles*, Ch. ii.

confession on the part of religion that the gulf between them is impassable, because the subject-matter of religion is "inscrutable." All Christians would of course admit that there is a sense in which God is "inscrutable." In fact, theologians, from Job downwards, have insisted on that truth quite as strenuously as any Agnostic.

"Dangerous it were for the feeble brain of man," says Hooker, "to wade far into the doings of the Most High; Whom although to know be life, and joy to make mention of His Name, yet our soundest knowledge is to know that we know Him not as He is, neither can know Him; and our safest eloquence concerning Him is our silence, when we confess without confession that His glory is inexplicable, His greatness above our capacity and reach. He is above, and we upon earth; therefore it behoveth our words to be wary and few."

But if we can have no science of anything which is inscrutable, it is hard to see how we can have any science at all.

"Creation," says Bishop Butler, "is absolutely and entirely out of our depth, and beyond the extent of our utmost reach. And yet it is as certain that God made the world as it is certain that effects must have a cause. It is indeed, in general, no more than effects

that the most knowing are acquainted with; for as to causes, they are as entirely in the dark as the most ignorant."

Mr. Herbert Spencer himself would hardly quarrel with that statement of the case; for he argues that infinite space and endless time, and matter, in its essential properties, are all inscrutable. "Matter," he says, though we can see and handle it, "in its ultimate nature is as incomprehensible as space and time." Yet, for all that, we have a science of matter, and Mr. Herbert Spencer is one of its foremost expounders.

Why, then, should the fact of God being inscrutable preclude the possibility of our having some knowledge of Him and arranging that knowledge in scientific order? If we can learn a great deal about the material creation without being able to comprehend "its ultimate nature," why may we not learn a great deal about the Creator while we confess that He is past finding out? Very few are the words in which Mr. Herbert Spencer states all that he professes to know of the First Cause; yet those few words contain a whole system of theology. "It is absolutely certain," he says, "that we are in the presence of an Infinite Eternal Energy from which all things proceed." To the eye of instructed reason that brief admission will draw after it a whole body of divinity

as surely as to the eye of the anatomist a single bone will reveal the structure and character of the body to which it belonged. "The man who proclaims the existence of the Infinite," says one of the most distinguished lights—in his own department the most distinguished light—of physical science—

"The man who proclaims the Infinite (and no one can avoid it) accumulates in that affirmation more of the supernatural than can be found in all the miracles recorded in all religions. For the notion of the Infinite has this double character—that it is at once self-evident and incomprehensible. When that notion masters our mind, nothing is left for us but to prostrate ourselves in adoration."[1]

If "it is absolutely certain," as Mr. Herbert Spencer assures us, that behind the veil of visible phenomena there is "the presence of an Energy," which is "Infinite, Eternal, and from which all things proceed," Reason suggests at least, if it does not demand, the additional attributes of intelligence and will; and intelligence and will imply personality; and personality implies social capacities;[2] and social capacities

[1] Speech of M. Pasteur on his admission into the Academy. See *Débats* of April 28, 1882.

[2] Is it not so? Do we not naturally and spontaneously associate capacity for social intercourse with our idea of person? Would not the word be robbed of much that it now connotes if we were to

in a perfect Being imply the means of gratifying them; and the means of gratifying them imply the coexistence in Mr. Spencer's "Infinite, Eternal Energy" of more than one Person. So that our Agnostic philosopher's definition of his First Cause starts us, by logical inference, on our way towards the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, which is a truth of Revelation.

So much, then, as to the alleged unfitness of theology for admission into the hierarchy of the sciences on the ground of its subject-matter being "unknowable." In so far as the objection has any validity at all, it is valid, in greater or less degree, against all sciences. Our knowledge of them all is only partial and relative; in no case absolute and complete.

And now let us come to the facts of the case with regard to our belief in a God Who is infinite, yet personal; Who pervades the universe, and yet is outside of it and independent of it. First of all consider the mystery of life. It is one of the greatest mysteries with which science has to deal. At one time, as we know, this earth which we inhabit was nothing else but a molten globe of fire, a mass of incandescent gases on which no kind of life with which science is

apply it to a being incapable of imparting or receiving either thought or feeling?

acquainted could exist for a single moment. Then the surface of our planet cooled, and there was formed upon it what is known in iron manufacturing districts as slag; and that cooled surface of the earth is now covered with an infinite variety of life. Where did that life come from? It is one of the incontestable conclusions of modern science that life must proceed from life; that there is actually no such thing as spontaneous generation. I will quote a few passages from some of the leading men among our scientific teachers on that question. Professor Huxley says: "The present state of our knowledge furnishes us with no link between the living and the not-living." Sir William Thomson, another of the great teachers of physical science, who some years ago was President of the British Association, uses these words: "Dead matter cannot become living matter without coming under the influence of matter previously alive. This seems to me as sure a teaching of science as the law of gravitation. I am ready to adopt as an article of scientific faith, true through all space and through all time, that life proceeds from life and nothing but life." Dr. Tyndall has, by a series of beautiful experiments, entirely demolished Dr. Bastian's so-called evidence in favour of spontaneous generation. That is the teaching of science—that life proceeds

from life and nothing but life. The great German philosopher Kant uses these words: "Give me life and matter and I will explain the formation of a world; but give me matter only and I cannot explain the formation of a caterpillar." All therefore that physical science can tell us is that life invariably comes from previous life. Well, where did that preceding life come from? Sir William Thomson, from whom I have just quoted, tried his hand at a solution some years ago. He suggested that life, the primordial germ of life on our planet, arrived on an aërolite shot from some distant orb. But the suggestion was rejected by men of science as an hypothesis for which there was not a vestige of evidence. If it were true it would leave us where we were; for where did the germ of life on the aërolite come from? Sir William Thomson's guess was thus no solution of the mystery at all; it pushed it a little further back, but left it a mystery still. Therefore we are driven to the conclusion that life upon this planet in all its vast variety of forms came from some life which itself was not created at all. Your own reason, if you follow its workings, drives you back to Mr. Herbert Spencer's conclusion, that all the phenomena of the created universe proceed from an uncreated cause—an Infinite, Eternal, living Energy which itself had

no cause, and which—although Mr. Herbert Spencer evades the conclusion—must be a Person, a Being endowed with intellect and will.

So far, therefore—putting aside the question of Revelation — the teaching of science forces us to believe in a Being, an uncreated Personal Life, from which, in the words of Mr. Spencer, "all things proceed." Well, when men of science themselves go so far as that, it seems to me that they are somewhat illogical in not accepting, at all events, the first article of the creed—"I believe in one God."

And now let us consider somewhat further some of the results to which this scientific conclusion leads. One of the first things that must strike a reflective mind, in surveying this world in which we live, is the prevalence in it of order. Now order implies mind, not merely power. You may have power without order, without any evidence of mind. You have power in the earthquake, in the volcano, in the tempest which dashes the waves of the ocean against the rocks and engulfs the passing ships; you have power but not order, and so far no evidence of mind. But what you have in the world around you is not power only—although you have that in abundance—but order, which implies mind. Suppose you were to take some dice and go on throwing them, and you found

that not once, twice, thrice, or four times, but invariably, the dice always turned up on one side, what conclusion would you arrive at? You would arrive at the conclusion—and could not help it—that the dice were loaded. And when you find in this world clear evidence of order, your own reason must drive you back to the conclusion that the world's dice—those laws of which scientific men speak—are loaded, that they did not construct themselves, that they are not haphazard, that there is some presiding mind that has so arranged the laws of Nature—as they are called—as to impress upon them that uniformity of operation to which some men appeal as if it were eternally and necessarily irrefragable. Look at the regularity of the seasons, look at the movements of the planets in their orbits, look at the mutually counteractive laws of centripetal force and repelling or centrifugal force. These two forces are so adjusted that they keep the planets exactly in their courses; but they do not account for the original adjustment of the stars and planets in their present relative position towards each other. Sir Isaac Newton, the discoverer of the law of gravity, said that the centripetal force and centrifugal forces accounted for the movement of the planets in their orbits, but not for their magnitude and relative distances or for the

original impulse which set them in motion. That is an insoluble mystery apart from Revelation. You cannot account for the order and regularity everywhere apparent unless you believe that they came from and are now presided over by an intelligent mind supreme over Nature. We sometimes speak as if it required a miracle on the part of Almighty God to destroy the universe, whereas, in truth, the miracle is in the universe going on. You may think it wonderful that at the word of Joshua the sun should stand still, whatever be the scientific explanation of a phenomenon which is not to be understood literally. But the wonder, after all, is, not that the sun should stand still, but that the sun should keep going on; not that things should come to a sudden stop, but that they should proceed in the regular order which we behold. Suppose you found a quantity of printers' type lying upon the ground in confusion, that would not suggest any order or presiding mind. But if you found the letters in regular order, forming words, and the words forming sentences, and the sentences conveying intelligent ideas, then your reason would force you to the conclusion that such order implied mind. Look abroad upon the world and you behold this regular order everywhere. Examine this building in which we are assembled; see its various styles

of architecture pointing to chronological order; look at its windows, formed to admit light but to exclude the air, with their pictorial representations, and you cannot help concluding that the Cathedral is the product of an ordering mind. Look again at Nature's arrangement of colours, combining utility with beauty. The prevailing colour is green—the most useful and pleasant to the eye. And when you admire the blue tint of the sky you should remember that it is in virtue of that tint that plants grow and bloom upon the earth: without it they would be starved to death, and our planet would lose that robe of beauty which makes it so attractive. That is another of the evidences of mind which you behold in Nature. We read a great deal of the doctrine of evolution—which I shall discuss later on—but after all, what is evolution even in the sense in which its most extreme teachers explain it? The doctrine of evolution explains a process, but does not account for the process. The doctrine of evolution leaves the commencement of things just where we find them—in the impenetrable darkness of mystery. Darwin admitted that the theory of evolution was not in the least degree a solution of the problem of existence; that it left the origin of things untouched. In matter of fact, if you accept the doctrine of evolution, what it does is

not to drive God further away from the world, but to bring Him nearer—to place Him in direct and providential contact with all the movements and processes of Nature. Evolutionists tell us that life, in all its infinite varieties, is derived from a primordial life-cell. Now living forms, as we know them, are essentially variable; but from constant mechanical causes constant effects would ensue. Without God, then, how shall we explain the multitudinous divergences of the original life-germ in the course of its development towards all the innumerable phases of life which we behold? Without the hypothesis of a presiding mind directing its processes the doctrine of evolution is a greater mystery than that of special creations.

II.

"I BELIEVE IN ONE GOD, THE FATHER ALMIGHTY."

EVIDENCE OF UNITY IN NATURE

AND now let us proceed with the first article of the creed. You remember that when I last addressed you I endeavoured to show that human reason itself drives us back to belief in a First Cause, a cause which itself had no cause, a cause which is eternal, living, personal, and which consists of more than one Person. The Creed goes on further to tell us that this First Cause, this Uncreated Being, though Three in personality, is One in essence:—"I believe in one God." Here, too, our reason drives us to that conclusion, just as it forces us to believe in a First Cause, which is an eternal, living, Personal Energy, from which all things proceed. To believe in several First Causes would be a contradiction in terms and an absurdity. So that if we believe in God at all, it is obvious that we must accept the further declaration of the Creed that there is but "one God." And Nature ratifies the dictates of

our own reason; she bears innumerable traces of having come from one designing and ordering Mind. In the relations of her parts to each other she is governed by a uniform system of laws. The law of gravitation prevails throughout the whole planetary and sidereal system, and so perfect is the mutual adjustment, so regular the movements of these vast bodies, that their relative positions may be calculated years in advance. Moreover, the spectroscope has revealed the fact that the constituent elements of the planets and distant stars are the same as those of our earth. That surely is another clear indication that the universe is the product of one creative Mind.

So, again, if you survey life in the multitudinous forms in which it appears on our planet, you see plain evidences of the same great truth. To take one example. Under the immensely varied forms of insect life you find a wonderful community of structure, irrespective of the size of the insect. The elongated body of the dragon-fly, the contracted form of the lady-bird, the different kinds of butterflies and moths, and tiny insects like the flea, have all one characteristic in common; their bodies consist of twenty primary segments. The same structural peculiarity prevails throughout the whole tribe of the crustacea—the crab, the lobster, the squilla, and all

the rest. How shall we account for this fundamental identity of type among hundreds of thousands of different species of insect life, if we reject the belief that they all came originally from one intelligent creative Will operative in and presiding over the realm of Nature? The doctrine of chances entirely excludes the possibility of such a result otherwise than as the outcome of a designing will. Darwin's explanation merely states facts; it does not account for them. The fact that insects, birds, quadrupeds, are aided in "the struggle for existence" by adapting themselves to their surroundings does not explain their power of so adapting themselves. Why does the ptarmigan, without any effort on its own part, become white as snow in winter and mottled, like the ground which it haunts, in autumn? To say that these changes of plumage help it in the struggle for existence is a truism, not an explanation. The neuters, which constitute the majority of every bee community, are sexually inchoate and barren. But if the queen should be destroyed or removed, the bees choose one of the neuter eggs that have been deposited in their appropriate cells, and form a "royal cell" by the demolition of several ordinary cells. The selected grub is then fed with "royal jelly," a pungent, stimulating aliment of a different nature from the "bee-

bread" which is stored up for the community. The grub thus treated comes forth a perfect queen, differing from the neuter into which it would otherwise have developed, not only in its sexual completeness, but also in the form of the body, in the length of the wings, in the shape of the tongue, jaws, and sting, in the absence of the hollow on the thighs in which pollen is carried, in its inability to secrete wax, and in its general instincts. Here we have an obvious proof of design which cannot be explained away by plausible phrases like "natural selection," "survival of the fittest," and "struggle for existence." The instinct of the bees denotes a Power behind the instinct working intelligently towards a definite and foreseen end. "For the 'fittest' to have survived, they must have come to possess the structure that made them the fittest,"[1] and neither Darwin nor his disciples have explained that secret. Surely the rational conclusion is that the Almighty Maker, with that comprehensive skill of which we observe analogies in master minds among ourselves, has selected the fittest plan for a certain class of bodily forms, and then adapted it with infinite variations according to the requirements of each case; just as in the composition of some great master of music your

[1] Dr. Carpenter's *Nature and Man*, p. 436.

ear may catch a simple melody running through all the variations and intricacies of the piece; or as a great architect or a great painter, through all his creations, has one style which marks him off from all others. And the loftier the genius is, the more characteristic and separate is the style of its productions. If, therefore, this world is the product of one supreme Architect and Painter, we should naturally expect His work to bear this characteristic of style; the adaptation of a comparatively few primary ideas to an infinite variety of results. And this is precisely what we find throughout the works of Nature.

But man demands not only satisfaction for the intellect in the postulate of a First Cause, from which all things proceed; he demands satisfaction for his affections and conscience as well. For man is not an intellectual being only; he is a being endowed with affections and a sense of right and wrong. He bestows love, and he demands it in return. It is one of our temptations to imagine that the great secret of human happiness lies in being independent, in being under no control, in being allowed to follow our bent and to have our own way in all things. This is a grievous fallacy. There is one Being in the whole universe, and one only, who can afford to be independent, and that is Almighty God, the ever-blessed Three in One.

He is perfectly independent. He needs nothing from without. He is the source, the centre, and the cause of His own happiness. And when He broke the silence of eternity with the sights and sounds of created life, it was not because He needed any accession of bliss from outside, but because His nature, like His name, is love, and it is of the essence of love to give itself away, to bestow itself on objects capable of appreciating it; feeling that it is more blessed to give than to receive.

But every created life, from the highest archangel to the lowliest worm that crawls along the ground, must seek its happiness in some source external to itself. Analyze your own hearts and you will find that it is so, and the history of mankind will teach you the same lesson. He Who formed him in the beginning declared that it was not good for man to be alone. Solitude is intolerable to a human being, and the most awful punishment you can inflict on a criminal is solitary confinement. Place a man in some vast solitude, and let that solitude be irradiated by the fairest combination of natural scenery that human imagination can conceive; let Nature be made to minister mechanically to his wants; let every wish be gratified as soon as felt. Would that man be happy in his solitude? Far from

it. He would pine for converse with a life independent of him, with some being who could understand him, exchange ideas with him, receive and give back love. And rather than feel utterly alone he would try to conceal his solitariness even from himself by investing inanimate objects with a fictitious life. He would welcome the mere semblance of life, anything that had movement in it, as a relief from the oppression of overwhelming stillness. Wandering clouds, waving forests, murmuring streams, the sound of waves breaking on the shore—anything to break the solitude, to withdraw the mind from feeding on itself, would be a relief to him. Man yearns for companionship, for the communion of his kind, for the society of lives which are spontaneous and therefore independent of him. A plant is thus better than the movements of inorganic nature, because it enshrines that unsolved riddle of science—the mystery of life—and piques man's curiosity accordingly, luring him onwards yet baffling his research. Flowers have a life independent of man, and they respond to his treatment of them. They flourish under his fostering care; they droop through his neglect. The forms and processes of vegetable life therefore interest man more than the movements of inanimate forces, because they have the charm of mystery. Your interest in

anything increases in the degree in which it eludes your efforts to unravel its secret. For the same reason an animal is more interesting than a flower. It has more of a spontaneous movement, and comes nearer to the life of man. It has the shadow of a free will, though not the substance, and enters more than the flower into the higher life of man.

But man is still unhappy. No kind of life beneath himself will satisfy his longing for companionship. He cannot rest in anything short of a life congenial to his own, his equal at least, his superior still better. We are not made for independence. It was the endeavour to be independent that ruined our race. Ransack the annals of sovereignty all the world over and you will find that the deepest longing of the human heart, even in its wildest aberrations, is not so much to possess as to be possessed; to be taken hold of, lifted up, guided, comforted, by some one it can love and trust. Make a man a despot, absolute monarch of all he surveys, with no one to dispute his will in anything; will that make him happy? No; he will long for some will to oppose his own, some one to whom he can bow down. And thus you will invariably find behind the throne some subject of the monarch—a minister, a favourite, a wife, a child, a mistress, it may even be a court fool—to

whom the master of millions is himself a slave. So impossible is it for man to live in solitude or be independent.

But in the wide realm of created beings there is no life on which man can repose in secure and absolute confidence. Created life through all its ranks is more or less unstable. Human life is so especially.

> **The gray-haired saint may fail at last;**
> **The safest guide a wanderer prove.**

The closest friend may prove false, the warmest love may turn to indifference, or even hate. And in any case a day of separation must come; we or they must pass the boundary of mortal life; one will be taken and the other left. Nor would even angelic life satisfy man's craving for companionship. There is no guarantee for the immortality of any created life apart from its uncreated source, and short of that source therefore man cannot rest. Besides, man is a creature of progress: that is the law of all intellectual and moral life. "They shall go from strength to strength" is the promise; "Be ye perfect as your Father Which is in Heaven is perfect" is the Divine command. To ensure this never-ending progress, man must have a perfect ideal, an ever-receding goal, towards which he is always moving, but which he

can never reach. The man who succeeds in realizing his own ideal in any department of intellectual or moral effort will excel no more. God alone, therefore, can satisfy the desires of the human heart. "O God," says St. Augustine, "Thou hast made the heart of man for Thyself, and it is restless till it rests in Thee." Therefore the creed goes on to say not only that we must believe in one God, but, in addition, that we must regard this one God as our Father, and as a Father Who, unlike human fathers, is almighty —able, that is, to make His will effective and bring His purpose to pass.

Here again the creed meets one of the irrepressible demands of human nature—the demand of a certain relationship towards its Creator, the relation of a child to its father. We believe therefore not only that God is the First Cause, that He is an eternal, living, Personal Energy, pervading all creation, yet above the creation and independent of it, and that He is a Trinity of Persons in one undivided essence; but further that this one God and Creator stands in the relation of Father to the creatures of His omnipotent will.

And yet, viewing the world at large, is that the relation in which it seems to stand towards its Maker? Are the attributes of a Divine Fatherhood those that

chiefly arrest our attention in our examination of nature? Does not Nature wear a cruel, heartless, relentless, almost mocking face, when man tries to read her purposes in her acts? Was there not some justification for Mr. John Stuart Mill when he retorted on those who lauded the benignity and beneficence of Nature, that if any man were to act as Nature was acting every day, he would in any civilized community be hanged? Look abroad upon the world. Where do you see the features of an Almighty Father? Is not the world like the Prophet's scroll—"full, within and without, of lamentation, and mourning, and woe?" Do we not feel with the Apostle that "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now"? That is the first impression which the study of Nature is calculated to make on a reflective mind. The world is full of misery and pain, and this apparently anterior to the entrance of sin and independent of it. Geology has deciphered for us the testimony of the rocks and of the everlasting hills, and there we find ample evidence of conflict and carnage long before the apparition of man upon the scene. Timorous flight and fierce pursuit; animals fleet of foot and strong of limb, with claws to rend and teeth to grind; whole tribes living on the violent death of creatures weaker than themselves—this is

what we find written on the unerring records of the time when man was not as yet. How are we to reconcile it with our belief in an Almighty Creator Who is the Father of a world which is one vast arena of carnage?

One view is that there is a great interval between the first verse of Genesis and the second: the first describing this earth as it came from the hands of God; the second describing it as ruined by Satan. According to that view, the chief of the fallen angels and his host ruled this planet and involved it in their own ruin. This would of course make suffering the consequence of sin from the very beginning. But it can only be a matter of more or less probable speculation, and we need not dwell upon it. It is better to seek for an explanation in regions which we can tread with firmer foot. We are now considering suffering as apart from sin—the existence of pain in the animal world. In this connection it is important to bear in mind the view which St. Paul gives us of the world in relation to the Mediator. In a passage already quoted he represents the whole creation as sharing not only in man's misery, but likewise in his redemption. And in the first chapter of his Epistle to the Colossians he tells us that Christ's Atonement embraced the universe; not only the human race, but

the whole intelligent and sentient creation, visible and invisible. I understand this to mean that the Incarnation of the Eternal Son of God is the copula that bridges over the chasm which had divided the Creator from the creature, thus making them in a manner at one with each other, the creation through all its series becoming a partaker of the Divine Nature by means of the Incarnation. Now, if this be so, may not the moral discipline of man, his perfection through suffering, find its analogue in the animal creation? At first, brute force seems to have it all its own way. It is not a survival of the fittest that we behold, but rather of the strongest, the most ruthless, the most cruel. But wait a little, and you shall see that even in the animal kingdom "the meek," in spite of all appearances, "shall inherit the earth." It is in the nature of violence to defeat itself, partly by the recoil of its own force and partly by raising up against it forces that shall eventually destroy it. It is so among men. Power created and sustained by violence is doomed. The old dominions that relied on force alone were short-lived, chasing each other like breakers on a beach. It is so also in the animal world. The animals that rely on violence alone for their existence are disappearing, and the meek and useful are taking their place. Nor is this all. The

very qualities which seemed to make the meek easy victims are precisely the qualities which have conduced to their survival—social qualities which have been developed by the discipline of suffering, and have made them more than a match for their oppressors. Thus we see that even in the animal world the battle is not in the long-run to the swift and strong, but to the gentle and long-suffering. The meek shall inherit the earth; the Cross shall overcome the sword. The law of vicarious sacrifice has thus its place in the lower creation, which exhibits its martyrs dying for the amelioration of the race. The suffering of the animal world may therefore be less purposeless and arbitrary and cruel than it seems at first sight.

But there is another consideration which may enable us to reconcile still more clearly the existence of suffering with belief in an Almighty Father. Is it certain that the suffering of animals is anything like as great as it seems? The real seat of pain is in the soul. In the excitement of battle soldiers often feel neither the weight of armour nor the pain of wounds: the intellectual and emotional part of man being otherwise intensely occupied, it does not feel the twitching of bodily nerves. It is so also in the case of any sudden mental shock: for a time the pain of bodily ills has ceased to be felt. What makes pain so

trying to us is our power of generalizing; our faculty of memory, of reflection, of anticipation. We store up in our memory the pains that we have endured, and feel vividly beforehand the pains that we expect. Animals have very little of this. With them each shock of pain, for the most part, begins and ends in itself. There is no prolonged agony. No doubt some of the animals which have come under the rule and discipline of man do in a slight degree remember and anticipate pain. But we are now speaking of animals in the wild state, and it may be doubted whether their suffering is really very great. A short chase and swift stroke, and there is an end of life. In this connection we may recall a very interesting suggestion thrown out by Dr. Livingstone in his account of his travels in Central Africa. He was attacked by a lion, which seized him by the arm, shook him violently (breaking his arm), dropped him and watched him for awhile, and then left him. Livingstone retained his entire consciousness unimpaired under the paw of the lion, but the shock deprived him of all pain and fear, and he says that he watched the lion with calm curiosity, wondering when the brute would begin to eat him. Reflecting on this incident afterwards, the great traveller came to the conclusion that, by a merciful provision of Providence,

the attacks of beasts of prey paralyze the nerves of sensation in their victims and destroy all fear. For these reasons then we may trust that there is comparatively little suffering in the animal world, as we know and understand suffering.[1] The higher, the

[1] "I am bewildered. I had no intention to write atheistically. But I own that I cannot see as plainly as others do, and as I should wish to do, evidence of design and beneficence on all sides of us. There seems to me too much misery in the world. I cannot persuade myself that a beneficent and omnipotent God would have designedly created the Ichneumonidæ with the express intention of their feeding within the living bodies of caterpillars, or that a cat should play with mice."—Letter from Darwin to Asa Gray in *Life and Letters of Charles Darwin*, vol. ii. pp. 311, 312. But what evidence is there that the caterpillar feels any pain while being devoured? For all we know, the sensation may be pleasurable, if (which is unlikely) so low an organization is susceptible of either pleasure or pain. And does it not stand to reason that if Dr. Livingstone lost all pain and fear after the lion had shaken him, a cat playing with mice may mean no misery at all? The fact is, we know far too little of the animal world to be justified in dogmatizing on this subject. Darwin himself, in this very letter, goes on to add: "A dog might as well speculate on the mind of Newton." After these addresses were in type I received, through the kindness of Messrs. Macmillan, a copy of Mr. Wallace's book on *Darwinism*, just published, and I am delighted to find that my view on this subject is covered by his great authority. Curiously enough, he too quotes the story of Dr. Livingstone and the lion; and he also quotes the following passage from the *Origin of Species*, which shows that Darwin had not made up his mind on the subject of pain among animals: "When we reflect on this struggle, we may console ourselves with the full belief that the war of Nature is not incessant, that no fear is felt, that death is generally prompt, and that the vigorous, the healthy, and the happy survive and multiply." *Darwinism*, pp. 36–40, by Alfred Russell Wallace, LL.D.

more refined the nature, the more sensitive it is to pain. In this way alone our Lord suffered as no other man ever suffered or can suffer. A refined, well-disciplined man suffers pain much more keenly than a rude, uneducated man of rougher fibre, although the latter will probably show the pain a great deal more. And inasmuch as animals are far lower in the scale of feeling than man, it is reasonable to suppose that their sensitiveness to pain is far less, however startling the outward manifestation of it may be. This, of course, is no excuse for inflicting unnecessary pain upon them. The Incarnation has invested the whole of the material creation with some degree of sanctity, and has laid on Christians especially the obligation of being considerate and tender to the lower animals, many of which are so useful to man, and so faithful and uncomplaining.

III.

"MAKER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH, AND OF ALL THINGS VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE."

GOD AS CREATOR.

So far I have been considering the creed as the answer of Christianity to the instinctive demands of human nature—man's intellect, affections, and conscience. The intellect forces us back to belief in a First Cause, which is an eternal, living, personal Intelligence, from which all things proceed. Our affections demand further that we should be able to stand towards this Supreme Being in an attitude of perfect trust—the attitude of a child towards its parent. And the creed responds to this universal craving of humanity by telling us that the one God is an Almighty Father, Whose care and loving-kindness, therefore, are over all His works, and Whom we can love and trust with absolute confidence, in spite of all appearances to the contrary. Clouds and darkness may be round about Him obscuring, and it may even be distorting, His features; yet righteousness and

judgment are ever the habitation of His seat. An Almighty Father, we feel instinctively, can never do or sanction wrong to His children.

We now approach another aspect of this great Being. He is the "Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible." We have already considered Him, in the language of Mr. Herbert Spencer, as "an eternal living Energy, from which all things proceed." But how do they proceed from Him? Is it by way of organic development, like an oak from an acorn, the material universe being but the visible robe of an all-pervading, impersonal, unintelligent life? That is the answer of Pantheism, which thus confounds and identifies the Creator with the creation, or rather excludes altogether the idea of creation. A diffused mindless Presence permeating the universe evidently offers no satisfaction to the deep-rooted desires of humanity; on the contrary, it flatly contradicts them all. We observe order and design in the universe; but order and design imply mind so evidently that our reason refuses to associate them with any cause short of mind. To suppose the contrary would be like supposing that this cathedral could have been designed by a jelly-fish, or that Handel's "Messiah" could have been composed by an accidental combination of sounds. Water cannot rise

higher than its source. It is an axiom in philosophy that the effect cannot contain more than there is in its cause. Our reason, if we give it fair play, rebels against the supposition of a Shakespeare or a Newton being the product of a formless, unintelligent ocean of being into which they have been reabsorbed like rain-drops into the sea. On such an hypothesis the world would be the offspring of mere chance, "a mighty maze without a plan," as the poet has it. But that is a conclusion which the doctrine of chances precludes. Chance may produce some extraordinary results; but these results lie within very narrow and calculable limits, and throw no light at all on the phenomena of the universe. Pantheism, therefore, fails to offer any solution of the origin of things, or on their permanence and order. And it fails still more conspicuously to satisfy the heart and conscience. When man's heart is crushed with sorrow, or his conscience outraged by a sense of wrong, it is sheer mockery to send him to an impersonal force for consolation. What he needs and cries for is a person, a being who can understand him, enter into his thoughts, sympathize with him and help him. And to that need Pantheism can make no answer; man might as well appeal to the voiceless waves or the unhearing winds.

Here, then, the Nicene Creed supplies a universal want. It tells us that the universe is not an eternal evolution, but a free creation; not an unconscious development from an unconscious force existing eternally, but a coming into being in obedience to the fiat of a supreme personal Will. The one God and Father Almighty is therefore further described as the "Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible." And this additional definition is no mere surplusage. It was needed to mark the absolute separation of the Creator from His work, and His perfect independence of it. In our experience of Nature the relation of parent to offspring is not that of creation but of development—the evolution of life from preceding life of the same kind by way of natural process. In no case do parents originate life: they pass on what they have received through a process whose interior secret no human skill can penetrate. It was not thus that the universe came from its Creator. It derives its origin from Him and is the product of His self-conscious energizing will. We are not now concerned with the mode of its production—with the infinite ramifications of its order and development; that is a fit subject for man's research and speculation, and it in no way touches the question of creation. What the creed

teaches is that the universe is not a part of Almighty God; no evolution out of Him like a forest from an acorn, like heat from the sun, like rain-drops from the ocean—transient forms of being eternally emerging out of a mindless and heartless soul of the universe, and then falling back into the formless mass of universal life and losing their individuality. To an intellectual being this of course would mean annihilation. A universally diffused impersonal formless life is an hypothesis for which there is not a shred of evidence. We know nothing of life apart from its individual manifestations.

What we learn from the creed, then, is that the universe came from the volition of an omnipotent creative personal Will; the universe, and not merely its cosmical arrangements; "heaven and earth, and all things visible and invisible;" all unseen forces and occult essences as well as whatever is apparent to the bodily senses or discoverable by the reason. To the Almighty Father the universe thus owes its being, its preservation, its movements, its beauty. Apart from Him it is nothing. Were He to withdraw Himself from it for an instant, as its immanent Life and personal Ruler, the universe would immediately collapse and there would be a universal silence of the spheres. Now of course the idea

of creation out of nothing is one which our minds cannot fully embrace, although reason seems to force us to that conclusion. But what does creation out of nothing imply? Does it mean that God Almighty, in the perfection of His triple Personality, lived alone through an untold eternity; no universe to fill infinite space; no sound to break infinite silence; no angels to render loyal service; no men or animals to live in the light of the sun and fulfil their brief span of mortal life?

That is one view; but is it the view which best accords with reason and with the teaching of Holy Scripture? If God is an Eternal Personal Energy, must we not think of Him as always working? Can we regard Him as existing through timeless ages in a state of self-contemplating repose,[1] and then passing into a condition of creative activity? Is it not both more reasonable and more Scriptural to think of Him as eternally creating—Eternal Love everlastingly

[1] This seems to have been Aristotle's notion; for, after defining *νοῦς* as "the most godlike of objective existences (*τῶν φαινομένων θειότατων*)," he goes on to argue that the more the mind is abstracted from phenomena and becomes independent of them, the nearer it approaches to perfection, which, according to him, consists in pure self-contemplation: *καὶ ἔστιν ἡ νόησις νοήσεως νόησις* (*Metaph.*, lib. xi. c. 9). This is Aristotle's highest conception of mind—in other words, of the Deity. It is obviously antagonistic to the Christian idea, which represents God as an ever-active Person.

pouring Himself out into the sphere of derivative life? "My Father worketh hitherto," says our Lord, "and I work." "Worketh hitherto:" it is the present tense, implying that God's work has no relation to time, but belongs to the perfection of the Creator, with Whom is no past or future, but an eternal present. And when we speak of creation out of nothing, do we mean by nothing an absolute vacuum? Omnipotence, of course, can do anything. Yet we do not think of the Omnipotent God as existing from all eternity in a blank void, and then surrounding Himself with created beauty; and certainly that is not the view of Him which the Bible gives us. Three things—probably different names for one attribute—are predicated of Almighty God in the Bible: "light," "glory," "beauty," all implying objective reality. The Psalmist speaks of God "covering Himself with light as with a garment," evidently meaning that the garment is eternal. St. Paul puts the matter more plainly when he describes God as "dwelling in unapproachable light." This light is spoken of elsewhere as "glory." In Ezekiel viii. 4; ix. 3; x. 19; xliii. 2, 4, "the glory of the God of Israel" is described as a visible token of His presence. In like manner "the glory of the Lord shone round about" the shepherds of Bethlehem on the night of our Lord's Nativity. And in Rev.

xv. 8 we read: "And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God." This Shechinah, or visible manifestation of the Divine Presence, accompanied the Israelites through their forty years' wanderings, and "dwelt between the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy-seat," until the destruction of Solomon's Temple. The "light" or "glory" in which God is thus eternally arrayed is sometimes described as "beauty" (Job xl. 10; Ps. xxvii. 4; xc. 17; Isa. xxxiii. 17). Of this Divine glory, this vesture of the invisible God, the universe is said to be the manifestation (Ps. xix. 1). It is represented as something anterior to time, and as shared by Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, before the world—the determined universe—was. Within the Triune Godhead are doubtless the conditions for pure love. The Persons of the Trinity may be thought of as loving each other in timeless peace and blessedness. But in this self-contemplation there would be no fertility or variety: and absolute love is surely more than mere complacency; it is ever active, ever producing. Undoubtedly we must regard the universe as a free creation, and not a process metaphysically necessary. But if we must at the same time regard the Divine Being as loving, and therefore necessarily active, can we avoid thinking of a universe as eternally issuing, not by absolute

necessity, but by God's free determination? In other words, is not love, though free, self-necessitated to create, and is not this self-determination the highest form of freedom; just as, in the language of one of our collects, God's "service" is described as "perfect freedom"? This certainly seems to have been St. Augustine's view of the relation of the Eternal Creator to the universe. But in truth all origin is inexplicable, and the connection between the creation and the Creator is one of those antinomies of faith which the human reason cannot comprehend.[1]

[1] Some sensation was made in the religious world a few years ago by a book called *The Unseen Universe*, in which it was argued, both on scientific and Christian grounds, that the visible universe is a development from an unseen spiritual universe, into which it is being gradually reabsorbed. The ὑλή (if I may use the expression), out of which the visible universe has been thus developed, the distinguished authors regard as a subtle æther existing from eternity, but not independent of God—on the contrary, the robe in which the Invisible is self-clothed from all eternity. The authors insist strongly on the doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation, assigning to the Second Person of the Trinity the office of developing the energy of the unseen universe, and to the Third, as "the Lord and Giver of life," that of developing and distributing the principle of life. The doctrine of creation out of nothing is enveloped in such impenetrable mystery, that theologians ought surely to deal tolerantly with reverent speculations on the subject, so long as such speculations allow that the whole creation, visible and invisible, is dependent on and subject to the will of the Almighty Creator. Among the Scriptural passages which the authors of *The Unseen Universe* quote in support of their view is St. Paul's saying, that "the things

Some people talk about the incredibility of miracles. What miracle can be compared to that of creation, however you view it? The wonderful thing is not that there should be an occasional counteraction of the ordinary movements of natural forces, but that these forces should have come into existence. The great miracle is the beginning of things. Once admit that, as the constitution of the human mind obliges us to do, and the question of miracles becomes a mere question of evidence; antecedent objection there can be none. The Being Who made the universe is necessarily free to manipulate its processes at His discretion; and to doubt either His ability to do so, or His willingness for adequate reasons, is an impertinence on the part of man. But I am not going into the question of miracles at present, though I may have occasion to do so later on.

And now let us go back for a moment to the idea

which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." "Eternal" may here, however, mean endless. A more apposite passage, as I have tried to show in the text, is that in which God the Father is described as "dwelling in light unapproachable; Whom no man hath seen or can see." We are evidently to understand this "unapproachable light" as an eternal vesture of God, coeval with Himself. Physical science does not yet appear to have said its last word on the nature and attributes of light, and there can surely be nothing inconsistent with the true Christian temper in such devout exercise of the human reason as we find in *The Unseen Universe*.

of creation out of nothing It is doubtless a bewildering idea, one that our reason cannot compass. I mean creation in the sense in which I have just explained it. Is it absolutely unthinkable? Have we anything at all analogous to it in our own experience? Can man be said in any sense to create out of nothing? Surely he may, though not in the absolute sense in which we predicate creation of God. What is a great poem, a great painting, a great statue, a great musical composition, but a creation out of nothing beyond the human mind and its experiences? Creation is not necessarily confined to what we call matter; the word embraces moral and intellectual existences. Take a play of Shakespeare—"Hamlet," for example. The Prince of Denmark is a real creation, and so are the other characters in the play. They leave vivid impressions on the mind. They interest us like real men and women. We can study their actions, analyze their motives, feel resentment or pity at the development of the plot—in short, they exercise our imaginations, feelings, and reasoning faculty like ordinary human beings: they are characters evolved out of the poet's creative mind, and are as distinct possessions of the understanding as any historical chararacters. A masterpiece of music or painting is likewise a creation of the same

kind, a fact in the world of ideas, in the sphere of intellect, which previously had no existence. Of course, there is this fundamental difference between Divine and human creations, that human creations cannot pass beyond the stage of ideas, cannot become actualized, without the aid of pre-existing materials.

Man is, therefore, in a subordinate sense, a creator —"a kind of god," as Bacon calls him; and this he is in virtue of his having been made originally in the image of his Maker. And as this attribute makes man in a manner a sharer of Divine Power, so it differentiates him by an impassable gulf from the animal world. There is nothing among the animals which corresponds to the creative power of man. Animals are ruled by instincts, which vary indefinitely, and which sometimes—especially in the case of animals brought under the civilizing influence of man—approach the confines of reason. Animal instinct is, in its own way and within its own limits, more perfect than the reason of man. Human reason is a faculty which is gradually developed. It is dormant in the child, and is educated by teaching and experience. But the instinct of the animal is perfect from the beginning; it requires no education and no experience to develop it. The bee constructs its hive on the most perfect mathematical principles

without any previous training; but it cannot apply its mathematics to any other purpose. The bird builds its nest and the beaver its dam without any previous apprenticeship, and they will go on building them when there is no occasion. Bees, moreover, and squirrels, and other insects and animals, make provision for the winter, storing up the necessary food against the time when it cannot otherwise be procured; and this they will do without any previous experience of fruitful and unfruitful seasons. A certain kind of wasp stings a spider in the main nerve, paralysing but not killing it; and then deposits it in its nest, where it remains motionless and fresh for the young wasps to feed on when they are hatched. Where did the wasp learn its knowledge of anatomy and physiology to sting always in the necessary place, and to inject just enough poison to paralyse but not to kill? How, too, does it select the proper food for its young offspring—food on which it does not itself feed? There is no reason here, any more than in the insectivorous plant which clutches and devours its prey, or in the sprig of ivy which unfailingly detects the crevice in the wall. It is in both cases a blind instinct working for an end which it does not foresee. It is a mechanical movement impelled and guided by an external force, not a self-originating power like

man's self-conscious rational will, intending what it does and using the appropriate means.

Another generic difference between man and the inferior animals is that he is capable of indefinite self-improvement, of which there is not a trace in them. Under man's controlling skill and discipline, indeed, both vegetable and animal life is susceptible of extraordinary improvement. Man, who is a kind of god to the lower creation, takes plants and animals in hand and raises them far above their unaided natural capacities. But the moment he withdraws his developing and regulating hand a process of degeneration immediately sets in, and the animal or plant lapses to its primitive condition, and there remains. This tendency of reversion to original type is admitted by Darwin, as in the case of the different varieties of pigeons, which, if left to themselves, will invariably return to the original type of the rock pigeon. In this fact we note a serious flaw in the theory of the transmutation of species—a theory for which there is as yet no evidence, and which is not necessarily convertible with evolution. But without going further into that point now, we see clearly that both plants and animals are under mechanical guidance which suffices for their needs, but bars progress. The range of choice is bounded by the

limitations of the instinct under which the animal is compelled to do its work. It acts from an irresistible impulse without any independent power to do or to forbear. This fundamental distinction between man and the animal creation is vividly expressed by the Psalmist when he speaks of the lower creation as held in the fetters of an inflexible law, in contrast with man, who is not in the grip of a mechanical necessity, but under the guidance of a moral law. Horse and mule must be "held with bit and bridle because they have no understanding;" but man is free, and to him therefore it is said, "I will guide thee with Mine eye." The story of Moses and the Burning Bush on Horeb is another illustration of the same truth. Why was Moses urgently warned not to approach the wonderful sight, and to treat even the precincts of the Divine Presence with reverence as "holy ground"? Because God is a consuming fire to all that is antagonistic to Him. Nature is not antagonistic. She obeys the laws imposed upon her in the beginning. She can therefore bear unscathed the flame of the Divine Presence. But man was made in the image of His Maker, and in virtue of that endowment enjoys the awful prerogative of free will, whereby he can successfully resist the will of Omnipotence. There are some things which—we

may say it with reverence—Almighty God cannot do. He cannot lie. He cannot contradict any of His own attributes. He cannot violate the harmony of His being. He cannot defeat, like erring man, any of His own purposes. Having dowered man with free will, He must leave him free to choose. And man often chooses to oppose the will of Him Who made him. Even the best of men are not altogether free in this world from the evil bias of self-will, and being thus in a state of antagonism to the Divine will, God is necessarily a consuming fire to them.

Now what is the faculty by means of which man is enabled to know God? Does he need a penetrating intellect, a soaring imagination, or great learning? If he did, the knowledge would of necessity be confined to comparatively few, and, moreover, we should expect to find that knowledge of the spiritual world increased according to man's intellectual power and learning. But this is far from being the case. "What sages would have died to learn is taught by cottage dames." "Mysteries," says the wise man, "are revealed unto the meek." The faculty which enables man to apprehend God is described in Holy Scripture sometimes as faith and sometimes as purity of heart. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." What did our Lord mean by

that benediction and promise? Consider the world around you, and you will find, in fact, a series of worlds enfolded one within the other; and it requires in all cases trained faculties, and, in some, special faculties, to descry "the mystic heaven and earth within, clear as the sea and sky" to him who possesses the educated eye or the special faculty. In the configuration of mountains and the formation of rocks the uneducated eye sees nothing more than appears upon the surface. The geologist surveys the same scene and spells out the complex history of extinct worlds. The uneducated eye looks up into the vault of heaven when the sky is cloudless and the firmament thick-set with stars, and sees nothing but tiny specks of light, in parts so close together as hardly to admit the insertion of a finger's point between star and star. The astronomer gazes on the same scene, and beholds another vision—interstellar spaces so vast that it takes years for a ray of light, travelling with lightning speed, to pass from one star to another; while the stars themselves, that seem so small, are immeasurably larger than our earth. But Nature has secrets which scientific knowledge alone can never discover—special faculties are needed. The man of science sees the glory of the dawn, the pensive beauty of sunset, the gracefulness of waving forests,

the sublime forms of lofty mountains, the majesty of the ocean, the form of "the human face divine," and he can tell us much that is interesting about them all. The artist sees the same things, and discovers in them much that had escaped the vision of the man of science. The poet follows both, and finds yet another world which neither artist nor man of science beheld, and he embodies his vision in immortal song. Multitudes of human beings had for years watched the agony of dying gladiators in the arena, and made of it a Roman holiday. The pathos of the scene one day appealed to the pity of an artist. He saw more than the brutal throng, and embodied his vision in imperishable marble. Centuries passed, and a great English poet looked on that dumb yet speaking marble, and he saw in those dying eyes more, probably, than the artist had consciously put into them—a Dacian captive, oblivious of the present scene, but mindful of a distant home, and a loved wife, with "his young barbarians all at play," far away by the shining Danube. The promise of Christ carries us a step further. It tells of a world not far away, but underlying the world of sense—a world of beauty beyond the ken of science and beyond the dreams of poet or of artist; and it says that this world too needs a special faculty to see it, but a faculty

within the reach of all—a pure heart and a docile spirit.

But if the Father Almighty is also "the Maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible," are we not confronted by a formidable difficulty? How shall we reconcile this article of faith with the origin and continuance of evil, with the unmerited suffering of innocence and the frequent triumph of wrong? The moral world is full of enigmas which seem insoluble on the hypothesis of a righteous Creator and Governor of the universe. Well, but are they soluble on any other hypothesis? What has Agnosticism got to say to them? Nothing, as the word implies. And Pantheism? It too is dumb. The difficulties are not caused by Christianity; they preceded it and are independent of it. They exist and must be reckoned with. Christianity, at all events, faces them and offers an explanation and a solution, although it does not promise to explain every difficulty. In the first place, we must remember that we are here in a very small corner of a vast system, and are therefore not qualified to pass judgment on the system as a whole. A man, born and immured all his life in a narrow room in a huge palace of many stories and endless chambers, is no fit judge of the architecture and internal arrange-

ments of the building. He must traverse its interior in all its parts, and must also go outside and walk round about it, as the Psalmist walked round the Temple on Mount Sion, before he can appreciate its architectural lines and harmonious proportions. Now we are inside God's system of government; occupying a tiny portion of it. Does it not stand to reason that multitudes of things which now perplex and baffle us, as we examine them from the little skylight of our limited and fallible understanding, would appear plain enough if we could only see them from outside? Let us then in this spirit glance at the origin and prevalence of evil. God is not the author of it; and yet the possibility of evil is latent in the possibility of virtue or moral goodness.[1] Moral goodness is im-

[1] A friend, to whose stimulating and acute mind these Lectures are much indebted, has called my attention to another aspect of the question, as suggested in the following passages from St. Augustine's "Confessions"—especially the following—as apposite here:—"And it became clear to me that those things are good which yet are corrupted; for if supremely good, they would be incorruptible; if not good at all, there would be nothing to be corrupted. For corruption damages; but unless it lessened goodness, it could not damage. Either then corruption does not damage, which cannot be; or, which is most certain, all things which are corrupted are thereby deprived of some good. But if they are deprived of all good, they must altogether cease to exist; for if they continued to exist and were no longer able to be corrupted, they would be better than they were before, because they would remain in a state of incorruptibility. But what more monstrous than to affirm that a thing has become

possible, or evil is possible. For virtue or goodness implies freedom of choice—that belongs to its essence; freedom of choice implies the possibility of making a wrong choice; and a wrong choice persevered in may harden into an inflexible character which even heathen philosophy could see might become incorrigible. God could doubtless have created beings who should follow the rule of right under the pressure of an irresistible force. But such beings would not be free agents, and therefore could not be the subjects of a moral law. Morality, goodness, holiness, could not be predicated of them; for these are qualities which are inseparable from free will. Neither plants nor animals can possess them. These you may call beautiful and useful; but you cannot call them good in the strict sense of the word; for goodness implies self-determined effort, and that necessitates free will. So far we can see, but no further. God having resolved to create beings capable of offering Him a

better by losing all the good it possessed? Therefore things deprived of all good cease to exist; and, consequently, as long as they exist they are good; and further, therefore, whatever is is good. That evil then, the origin of which I had been searching out, had no being of its own; for had it a being, it would be good" (Bk. vii. ch. 12). Evil has thus no substantial existence: it is simply the absence of good. Aquinas develops the thought into (1) negative—mere absence of good; (2) privative—the taking away of goodness from something that had enjoyed it; (3) consequently the intrusion of a positive element of corruption.

free and willing service, the possibility of going wrong seems to follow as a logical consequence. We can thus see the two terms of the problem, but not their point of union. It may be that a more elevated vision would enable us to solve the riddle, and perhaps we shall find that there is no riddle at all to solve "when the day breaks and the shadows flee away." Of one thing at least we may be sure, namely, that the more we cultivate purity of heart, singleness of aim, and unselfishness in all things, the less likely are we to be troubled by any of the moral and intellectual difficulties which are more or less inseparable from our present life, and are probably a necessary element in our moral discipline.

IV.

"THE FATHER ALMIGHTY."

PERSONALITY OF GOD.

WE have now got so far as this, that the Universe came into existence by the creative will of a Personal Being, Who is eternal, infinite, almighty, and the Father of all. We are now to consider this great Being in Himself; that is to say, in the way in which He has been pleased to reveal Himself to us. But here we are challenged by an objection on the threshold of the argument. It is said that there is no such revelation of Almighty God as I have described; that nature reveals to us only an impersonal force; and that the God of the Old Testament is not represented there as a Personal Being at all, but merely as a stream of tendencies. I have already dealt with the evidence which nature presents to the human mind of being the product of an almighty Personal Creator, and I need not go back upon it. But what says the Old Testament? Is it true that the God of the Hebrews

as we read of Him in the Old Testament is not a Personal Being, and that language which to ordinary minds seems to appeal to a Personal Being points to a mere stream of tendencies—emotions thrown out in poetic form and with poetic licence at an abstract impersonal something, external to ourselves, "which makes for righteousness"? Such is the view gravely propounded some years ago in a popular volume, called *Literature and Dogma*, by the late Mr. Matthew Arnold, a gentle and an attractive spirit whom it was impossible to know without loving, and of whom I shall never speak or think without respect and affection. But Matthew Arnold was far too true a man to wish that any friend of his should, out of consideration for himself, shrink from criticizing frankly and honestly any view he might put forth. I shall not hesitate, therefore, to express my surprise that a man of his intellectual power and critical acumen should have propounded a view which seems to me altogether inconsistent with the language of the Old Testament. I can understand, indeed, quite an opposite view of the representation of Almighty God given to us there. I can understand the Old Testament being charged with encouraging anthropomorphic views of Almighty God, ascribing to Him the feelings and attributes of man, and regarding

Him as a kind of tribal Deity Who watched with personal solicitude over the fortunes of Israel. But to say that the Hebrews, as they are portrayed in the Old Testament, did not regard their God as a person at all, but as a mere impersonal energy, as a stream of tendencies, as an unintelligent force external to themselves that made for righteousness, is a proposition which seems to me so amazing as hardly to be worth criticizing, had it not been published by a man of the great reputation of Mr. Matthew Arnold, and had it not at the same time seemed to have recommended itself to the acceptance of some intelligent minds.

Let us consider, then, this opinion in the light of a few cardinal facts in the Old Testament. Look at the history of the Patriarchs. What view is there given to us of Almighty God, and how do the Patriarchs regard Him? What were Abraham's relations with God? Were they the relations of a human being towards a stream of tendencies? God is represented as announcing to Abraham, who was then old and childless, and whose wife was past the age of child-bearing, that his seed should hereafter be numberless, like the stars of heaven and like the sand on the beach. Afterwards two angelic visitants appear to him and foretell the birth of a son, to the incredulous surprise of Abraham's wife. In another

place we have a dramatic account of a conversation between God and Abraham about the coming doom of Sodom. The Patriarch pleads for the doomed city, and the Almighty answers him. And we are to believe that in all this Abraham knew, and his descendants knew, that he was holding a colloquy with an impersonal influence of which the fittest designation is "the Eternal not ourselves which makes for righteousness"! Look again at the history of Jacob. How did he regard Almighty God? As a Personal Being? or as a stream of tendencies? Evidently as a Person. He erects an altar to Him. He prays to Him. He makes promises to Him and votive offerings. And on his return to his father's home he wrestles with a mysterious Person whom he refuses to let go until He has left him a blessing; and the mysterious wrestler refuses to give His name, but changes Jacob's name to Israel, thereby revealing indirectly His own: "For as a prince hast thou power with God and with man, and hast prevailed." "And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel; for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." I am not now discussing the interpretation or the significance of this incident in the life of Jacob. I merely ask if it is conceivable that the writer of that passage or the generations of Israelites who read

it from age to age believed that the Being who is represented as wrestling with Jacob was simply a stream of tendencies—a blind movement of moral forces? Jacob lived doubtless in an early stage of the world's spiritual development; but he was not so stupid as to build an altar, and offer prayers, and make promises to a stream of tendencies. Nor was he likely to represent himself as wrestling and talking with a Personal Presence, Who gave him a new name and left His mark permanently on his body, when all the while he merely meant that his soul was under the influence of a poetic *afflatus*. The history of Joseph supplies a still clearer illustration. What was it that saved him in the hour of his great temptation? He was not unmindful of his duty to Potiphar. But the great restraining motive is revealed in his question:—"How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" Not against Potiphar, you see—though Joseph had not forgotten him—but against God, the Lord and Master alike of Potiphar and Joseph. Potiphar sinks into comparative insignificance in view of the Great Personal Presence, Who had protected Joseph, and to Whom Joseph felt that he owed unswerving allegiance. "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" Sin implies a person. You may violate a

law, you may oppose a force; but sin is necessarily committed against a person. You may resist the law of gravitation; but you cannot sin against it. You may swim against a stream; but you cannot sin against it. Righteousness is inseparable from personality. You cannot imagine a righteousness which should not be personal. Joseph's answer to Potiphar's wife is alone, therefore, a clear proof that he regarded the God of Israel as a Personal Being, and not simply as an impersonal current bearing him along in the direction of righteousness. My next instance is the vision of the Burning Bush to Moses on Mount Horeb. When Moses draws near to see the wonderful sight, a voice, which presently proclaims itself as that of Jehovah, warns him off, and bids him uncover his feet because the place whereon he stands is sanctified by its vicinity to the visible symbol of God's Presence. Besides, the whole history of the Exodus is quite irreconcilable with the notion that the Israelites believed, not in a Personal God, but in a stream of tendencies. And what shall we say of David? Take his passionate outburst of penitence in the fifty-first Psalm, when his slumbering conscience was roused by the prophet's exquisitely beautiful parable of the poor man's ewe lamb, which the rich man, possessed of "many flocks and herds," had slaughtered in order

to spare his own. In the agony of his remorse David forgot Uriah and Bathsheba and his child —the child of guilt and shame. His all-absorbing feeling, the feeling that smote him with penitential agony, was the wrong he had done to God, his black ingratitude to the gracious Being Who had watched over him as he tended his father's flocks upon the hills of Bethlehem—the Being Who had delivered him from the paw of the lion and the bear, and from the sword of Goliath. "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight;" that was the thought that filled David's soul with anguish. Examples might be multiplied indefinitely, but one more will suffice—that of the Patriarch Job. Who can read the controversy described in that highly dramatic poem, and suppose that Job and his would-be comforters did not believe in a Personal Governor of the universe? Why, the redeeming quality of some of the Old Testament saints—men of mixed character—was their intense realization of the spiritual world and its Personal Ruler, Whom they believed to be supreme over the forces of Nature and the destinies of men. Jacob was a man of craft and guile, mingled with tender and persistent affections; but he was also a man who could look through the world of sense into the

spiritual world beyond, with its angelic inhabitants and Supreme Ruler; and this spiritual insight enabled him gradually to purge his character of all that was mean and false. And why is David called so emphatically "a man after God's heart"? His life was stained by atrocious crimes — treachery, adultery, murder. Yet still, and spite of all, he is called a man after God's heart. Why? Because he too had the root of the matter in him; because, with all his sins, he had vivid faith in a spiritual world that was governed by a righteous Ruler, with Whom he, the shepherd boy of Bethlehem and King of Israel, had personal relations. There is always hope for a man who believes in that great truth, however grievous may be his falls, and it was David's extraordinarily clear perception of it that enabled him to recover so quickly his spiritual integrity, and made him a man after God's own heart.

Then think of some of the Old Testament descriptions of the God of Israel, and you will find nothing in any literature surpassing them in the exquisite tenderness of their pathos. In one place we find Him compared to an eagle teaching her young how to fly; flinging them out of the nest into the air that they may practise their pinions, and then, when they are exhausted and falling to the earth, darting under

them with outspread wings and bearing them aloft in safety. In other places He is pictured as a tender shepherd watching over His flock, guiding them to green pastures and refreshing streams, bearing the lambs in His bosom and gently leading the sheep that are with young. And then again we find His relations to Israel imaged under those that unite bridegroom and bride. Is it conceivable that a people whose imaginations were fed on such teaching as this, whose whole character was steeped in the doctrine of personal relations with Jehovah, never thought of Him as a Person at all, but merely as a stream of tendencies? The marvel is that any one capable of critical examination and reflection should ever have thought so. It is much nearer the truth to say, with Arthur Hallam,[1] that those old Hebrews loved their God with a personal passionate devotion so ardent as to be almost "erotic" in its fervour. It was a love pure, unmercenary, and elevating. The God of the Hebrews was neither a cold abstraction dwelling apart from His creatures in Epicurean unconcern, nor a capricious divinity who must be kept in good humour by an elaborate system of bribes; but a Being of tender affections, Who watched over the fatherless and defended the cause of the widow; Who loved justice

[1] *Remains*, pp. 277, 278.

and mercy and would "by no means clear the guilty;" Whose "mercy was over all His works," forbidding to "muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn," or to "seethe the kid in its mother's milk," or to carry off the dam bird while nursing her brood. It was this combination of almighty power with loving-kindness that melted the heart of the ancient Hebrew and weaned him at last from the corrupting influences of the nations around him. His God was not far away, but very near him—"about his path and about his bed, and spying out all his ways." He "put" the penitent's "tears into His bottle," and "in His book were all his members written." From His Presence there was no escape. "If I climb up into heaven, Thou art there; if I go down to hell, Thou art there also. If I take the wings of the morning, and remain in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me." And this all-embracing Presence, while it precluded all possibility of escape to the sinner, was a Presence of love and joy and protection to the righteous, and a Presence, moreover, which yearned for human affection.

I think then that we may dismiss from our minds once for all the idea that the God of the Old Testament was not regarded by the Jews as a

Personal Deity. But did they believe in Him as a Trinity of Persons? It must be admitted that the doctrine of the Trinity is not plainly taught—is not taught at all in fact, except by implication and casual tokens—in the Old Testament Scriptures. And the reason is plain. The world was overrun with polytheism and all the idolatrous pollutions that were inseparable from the gods many and lords many that mankind worshipped. There was therefore a terrible danger that a premature revelation of the doctrine of the Trinity would encourage the spread of polytheism, even among the chosen people whom God was training to be the teachers and regenerators of the human race. Consequently we only find imperfect and cursory glimpses of the doctrine of the Trinity in the Old Testament; enough to indicate the truth, but not to propagate or sanction error. Let us take a few examples.

Most of you are aware that one of the names by which God is known in the Old Testament is the Hebrew name Elohim. Now Elohim is a plural noun; yet in the Old Testament it is associated with singular verbs and adjectives, thus indicating plurality in unity. Again, if you look at the account of creation in the first chapter of Genesis, you will find that after the emergence of order out of chaos, there is a deliberative

pause when the frontier is reached which separates man from all below him. "And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness." There, again, you have the Creator represented as a plurality of Persons. And when man fell through disobedience, we read: "And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of Us." The same significant phraseology is used in describing the confusion of tongues at Babel:—"Let Us go down, and there confound their language." It would take too long to trace these foregleams of the truth throughout the Old Testament; I am merely giving samples, and shall conclude with a reference to the sixth chapter of Isaiah. In the first place you find a triple ascription, by the Seraphim, of holiness to the Lord of Hosts; after which the prophet in vision "heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall *I* send, and who will go for *Us?*" A clearer intimation you could hardly have of a plurality of Persons in the Divine unity.

Another fact which points in the same direction is the description of God as a Being of overflowing love —love personified. But love necessarily implies plurality—a subject and an object; and in a perfect Being love implies possession of its object. I have already shown that since man is a being endowed with love, there must of necessity be satisfaction for that uni-

versal craving, because even the most thorough-going evolutionists agree that every universal instinct implies a corresponding satisfaction; and experience proves that human love cannot rest in any object short of its own kind at least. The same argument applies to Divine love. God being love eternally, it follows that He must from all eternity have been conscious of reciprocal love—in other words, that the perfection of the Godhead lies in a unity of Essence embracing a plurality of Persons. Thus you see the doctrine of a Trinity is implied in that attribute of God which is the most encouraging and most consoling to man —the attribute of love. Love implies duality, and in its fulness trinity. We see it in its perfection in the family: bridegroom and bride united in a bond indissoluble, with offspring proceeding from both. This is no mere idle fancy; it is the image under which the Incarnate Son represents His sacramental relation to His Church.

I remarked a while ago on the fact that the great peril of polytheism made it necessary that the doctrine of the Trinity should be very gradually revealed. Did it ever strike you how wonderfully this process of gradual revelation characterizes God's discipline of man adown the ages in secular as well as in religious matters. Look at the vast

interval which separates the proclamation of the moral law from the modern discoveries of physical science. Thus viewed, what a different meaning physical science must have for those who suppose it to be the puzzling out of a riddle of which no human being has the key—to which, indeed, for aught we know, there may be no key—and for those who suppose physical science to be the knowledge of natural laws, which had been providentially withheld from us till the far more important knowledge of moral laws had been thoroughly impressed on us. If the revelations of physical science had preceded those of moral law, what a pandemonium this world would have become. In the old days of Paganism, when the chronic relation of nation with nation, tribe with tribe, almost family with family, was a relation of antagonism and self-seeking, the knowledge of the hidden forces of Nature, which man now enjoys, would have placed an instrument in man's power which would have tempted and enabled the race to destroy itself in internecine carnage. Therefore the moral law was proclaimed amidst the thunderings and lightnings of Sinai ages before man was allowed to learn the secret of the terrific forces which lay, like the spirits of Eastern fable, imprisoned around him. Man's conscience had to be educated, his affections purified, his

dominant selfishness to be subdued, before it could be safe to trust him with the knowledge and control of Nature's laboratory. Surely the remarkable fact that a law like the Decalogue far preceded a sound knowledge of the laws and forces of Nature shows that Nature is under the government of a moral Being Who reveals her forces in the degree in which the knowledge of them would be safe for man. It is in Christendom, where the law of the Cross on the whole prevails, that man has been allowed the knowledge of the potent forces of destruction which modern science has disclosed. How striking, too, is the coincidence of the discovery of the gold fields with the acceptance of free trade by the greatest commercial empire in the world. Had either of these events preceded the other, the commerce of the world would have been disorganized, and there would have been universal confusion and ruin. Not till man was able, so to speak, to bridge over the ocean, and to furnish a quick transit for the exchange of international products, was the precious metal discovered in such unexpected abundance. But there would have been a glut of gold in the market and chaos on every Exchange unless the free trade of Great Britain had opened an outlet for the surplus. Is not this a wonderful illustration of the providential

government of the world by a Personal Ruler Who guides alike to His own wise ends the forces and properties of Nature and the wills and needs of men? So much, then, by way of illustration of the gradual development of the revelation of God's Will in the sphere both of man's spiritual and secular life.

And now let us return to our consideration of the doctrine of the Trinity. We need not linger over the evidence of it in the New Testament. I shall only cite two examples—the Baptismal formula prescribed by our Lord, and the Apostolic benediction. The significance of the latter is obvious. The full significance of the former is not quite so apparent. Our Lord has ordained that entrance into His Church shall be by baptism "into the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost;" the *name*, you see, not *names;* a Trinity in unity, and a coequality in the Trinity. But what do we mean by the doctrine of the Trinity? We mean that there is in the Divine Essence a Triad of Persons, each Person being very God, and all so distinct from each other that the personal pronoun may be applied severally; yet at the same time so united, each to each, by definite correlations, that together they constitute One Indivisible God. It is necessary, however, to have a clear conception of what we mean by the word "person" in this con-

nection. In ordinary language it is an ambiguous expression. We use it sometimes for an individual as contrasted with a class or multitude, as when we speak of having "personal objection" to another. We use it for the body in contrast to the soul, as when we speak of "beauty of person." It is not in any of these or similar senses that we use the word when we speak of the Persons of the Blessed Trinity. It is not easy to explain the matter to those who are not accustomed to the technical language of philosophy and theology; and I must, therefore, ask you to be so good as to give me your closest attention. The two attributes of personality are self-consciousness and self-determination. By self-consciousness I mean the knowledge which enables a man to speak of himself as "I" and of others as "thou" and "he" or "she;" the knowledge by which he differentiates, by which he separates himself clearly from everything which is outside of him, and which he knows is not himself. Animals have no self-consciousness. They do not think of themselves and reason about themselves as personalities—separate, self-perceiving, distinct beings with a past, a present, and a future. They live in the present moment. Each minute of time as it passes is their all in all. They look neither behind nor before. They are bounded by the range of their

bodily appetites, and have no thought beyond it. But man is a self-conscious being, contemplating himself and contemplating the world outside of himself. He has also a self-determining power. He originates. He creates. He resolves and chooses. He foresees in a measure. He puts an end before himself to strive for. He deliberates, and he adapts his means to his end. Animals, on the other hand, have no self-determining power, no independence, no originating faculty. They are enclosed within the narrow circle of their appetites, and can never of themselves rise superior to their bodily environment. So much then as to the meaning of personality, as we use it in the creed. But you must remember that it is only an approximation to the truth, not an exhaustive explanation. Personality, as we know it, implies limitations; and God is infinite. Human language cannot compass divine things. The ideas of eternity are too vast and mysterious to be adequately envisaged in the forms of time.

But in what relation do the Persons of the Trinity stand towards each other? They are described as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. In the language of theology, the Father is "the fountain of Deity." He has thus priority over the Son and the Holy Spirit, yet a priority not of nature or of time, but only of

dignity and order. Moreover, when we speak of the Son we use the expression in three senses. First, He is the Father's only-begotten Son, His Son by eternal generation as the indwelling Reason in the bosom of the Father. You remember that St. John in his Gospel speaks of Him as the Word. The Gospel was written in Greek, and in Greek reason and speech are expressed by one word—*logos*. Reason is speech in thought; speech is reason in utterance. The Son was thus from all eternity in the bosom of the Father as the Logos unexpressed, the Idea inarticulate, a Personality in no relation to anything external to and separate from the Divine Essence. In the second place, we think of Him as the Creator of the universe, issuing from the bosom of the Father as the internal thought issues in speech. This is the second aspect of His Sonship. He, the Infinite Reason, comes into relationship with the finite creation. He is thus, in the profound language of St. Paul, "the first-born of all creation." The Reason immanent has become the Reason issuing forth into the sphere of created life. "By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath"—that is, the Spirit—"of His mouth." In that passage the Word does not mean speech, but the Word as used in the Gospel of St.

John, namely the Son, creating the world and reducing it to order by the operation of the Holy Spirit, "the Lord and Giver of life." In the third place, the Eternal Word became a Son in another sense when He became Incarnate, taking manhood into inseparable union with His Divine Person. He is thus, remember, Son in a threefold sense; the first, by eternal generation; the second, by adoption as "the first-born of all creation;" the third, as "the Son of Man." There never was a time when God the Father was not Father; consequently there never was a time when God the Son was not Son. Here earthly analogies are apt to mislead us. With us a son comes after his father in order of time; and yet the child is in a sense latent in the father before he issues into visible being. But let us take the illustration of the Nicene Creed. The Son is "Light from Light." The light of the sun is coeval with its source. The heat of flame is inseparable from the flame. And now I wish you to get these three terms firmly fixed in your minds. Christ is "the only-begotten Son of God"—that applies to His eternal generation. He is the "first-born of all creation"—that applies to Him as the Word emerging to create the universe. He "was Incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary"—that applies to Him as the Son of Man. The term

"first-born" is applied to Christ six times in the New Testament; and in every case it means His relation to the universe either as its Creator or its Redeemer; never His relation to the Father as the only-begotten Son. The passages are Rom. viii. 29; Rev. iii. 14 and i. 5; Col. i. 15 and i. 18; Heb. i. 6. Finally, remember that the Godhead consists of three Persons, not three phases or characters of one Person. That was the heresy of Sabellius, who maintained that the internal correlations of the Trinity were simply successive and temporary phases of character, God appearing at one time as Father, another time as Son, another as Holy Spirit. In opposition to that heresy the Church teaches that the Trinity in Unity consists of three distinct Persons, Whose relations to each other are not successive and temporal, but coincident and eternal.

V.

"AND IN ONE LORD JESUS CHRIST, THE ONLY-BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD, . . . WHO FOR US MEN, AND FOR OUR SALVATION CAME DOWN FROM HEAVEN."

MAN DEMANDS A MEDIATOR,

THE method which I have adopted in explaining the Nicene Creed has been that of showing that it meets the wants of human nature; I mean, of course, the spiritual part of man. The lower animals are satisfied when their bodily wants are supplied. They have no curiosity about themselves; no consciousness of the past, no thought of the future; they live, as far as we can judge, entirely in the present. But man needs more than the satisfaction of his bodily appetites; he is conscious of spiritual needs which crave for appropriate nourishment as truly as the hunger and thirst of the body crave for food and drink. He feels that he has a history extending far back into the past and stretching forward into the future; that his present life is somehow mysteriously influenced by the past

of his race, and that his future life will certainly be influenced by his present life. Whence came we? Why are we here? Whither are we going? What mean these instincts, yearnings, premonitions, outside of bodily wants, of which we are all conscious? These are questions which the heart of man has been asking itself in all ages, and which it cannot cease to ask till it has ceased to beat. It cannot rest in Agnosticism; it cannot acquiesce in ignorance. Man sees that there is a difference in kind between himself and all else in the world around him. He feels that his short life here is not the whole of him; that there is a spiritual world with which he has relations, and into which death will introduce him. The lower animals are adapted to their abode when their bodies are developed; there is no indication of higher development for them. Look at the bird in the egg; it is not adapted to its abode; you see that it has rudimentary organs pointing to another state of being, of which it is not yet in possession. If you examine the chrysalis of the stag-beetle, you will see that the case is much larger than the insect apparently needs. But when the beetle has emerged from its chrysalis you find the reason of what puzzled you; the temporary tenement had to be made larger than the needs of its tenant to allow room for the new form which it was

about to take; the future horns of the beetle had to be provided for. Man is not adapted to his present condition: the case is not large enough for its tenant. There is nothing here which entirely satisfies him; he has aspirations, feelings, and longings which far transcend the boundary of his mortal life. The most highly favoured of mankind have confessed this. Goethe was one of the most highly favoured men, not only of his own time, but of all times, a man of rare personal beauty, transcendent genius, great learning, admired and courted by men and women, with no pangs of sorrow, or suffering, or disappointment to embitter his life. If ever there was a human being who might look back upon his life with satisfaction you would say that Goethe could, if it be true that man is adapted to his life on earth as the goal of his career. Yet listen to what Goethe said, at the close of what seemed a highly prosperous life:—"I have ever been esteemed one of fortune's favourites; nor can I complain of the course my life has taken. Yet surely there has been nothing but toil and care; and in my seventy-seventh year I may say that I have never had four weeks of genuine pleasure. The stone was ever to be rolled up anew. We may lean for a little while upon our friends, but in the end man is always driven back upon himself. And it seems to me as if

God had placed Himself in such relation to man as not always to respond to his reverence and trust and love —at least in his hour of greatest need." But here the great poet tries to lay upon God the blame which in fact belonged to himself alone. For Goethe tells us in another place that, having come to the conclusion that the indulgence of sympathy and affection was prejudicial to the development of his genius, he deliberately set himself to suppress that part of his nature. And certainly his heartless treatment of women, to quote nothing else, goes far to prove that he succeeded in sacrificing the moral part of his nature to the intellectual and æsthetic. He made himself his own idol, and ended in having no "reverence and trust and love" to which God could "respond." An awful example truly of what comes of adapting one's life to this world as one's home.[1]

[1] On reading this passage in the published reports of these lectures, a gentleman wrote to me from Weimar, very courteously, to question the accuracy of my representation of Goethe's conduct to women, and he referred, *inter alia*, to Goethe's "affection for Gretchen" as "a true overflowing of love." I am sorry to be obliged to retain my opinion. The Gretchen episode occurred too early in Goethe's life to be relevant, and his subsequent love-affairs were used by him deliberately as materials in aid of his own progress to intellectual and æsthetic self-development. That he crushed in this process the hearts which he had set himself to win hardly seemed to have caused him any serious compunction. I am glad to fortify my own opinion by a quotation from Mr. R. H. Hutton's most masterly essay

Now the creed, in so far as I have explained it, meets these needs of human nature. But it does not meet them completely. It tells us that this world, including man, came from the hands of an Almighty Creator, Governor, and Father, with Whom man is able to hold some kind of intercourse. If the creed

on *Goethe and his Influences*. Mr. Hutton (*Essays, Theological and Literary*, vol. ii. pp. 41, 42) quotes the following sentence from a letter written by Goethe to Lavater: "The desire to raise the pyramid of my existence—the base of which is already laid—as high as possible in the air absorbs every other desire, and scarcely ever quits me," and observes that "it soon became his habit to cultivate disinterested affection only as a subordinate element, needful to the harmony of a universally experienced nature. To have loved the goodness of either God or man more devotedly than he loved its reflex image in his own character would have done him more good than all the sickly pottering with the 'pyramid of his existence' with which he was so much occupied. It would be absurd to say all this about Goethe's youthful conduct to Frederika, were it not the type of what was always happening in his after-life, when he knew by experience that he very much preferred to be passively hampered by a wounded heart to being actively hampered by an affectionate wife. The essence of these tedious tortures was almost always the same. He wished for love with limited liability; he did not wish to devote *himself* to any one except himself." In short, he cultivated and enjoyed the love of women as an æsthetic luxury, and he experimented on it with the most heartless selfishness. I am indebted to an eminent public man for the suggestion that the idea of duty hardly existed in the character of Goethe; so that it was with a true instinct that his countrymen selected for his monument at Frankfort the following words from his own *General Beichte*: "*Im ganzen Guten, Schönen, Resolut zu Leben.*" The "good" here, as is evident from the context, means the good of intellect, and has nothing to do with moral duty.

had told us nothing beyond this, it would have told us a truth of unspeakable preciousness and importance; but man feels that he needs more. If the creed had stopped there, God would have remained far away, at a lofty elevation and at an infinite distance from man, far away not in space but in nature. The gulf which separates the Creator from the creature is infinite, and, on the part of man unaided and alone, impassable. Therefore in all ages men have yearned for a mediator, for some being who could bridge the chasm that divides the Creator from the creature, and thus enable man to hold intercourse with his Maker. Let us briefly consider some of these instinctive desires of human nature for a mediator and for "a city which hath foundations" somewhere beyond the shifting sands of time, before we come to the answer which the creed makes to them. But it may be useful, in the first place, to see how far these instincts can be quoted as evidence in the argument. And here I may appeal confidently to the teachers of evolution themselves. For what does the doctrine of evolution teach? It tells us that any instinct which is generic, that is to say, which is coextensive with the race, must have its appropriate satisfaction. Hunger implies food; thirst implies drink; the eye implies sight; the ear implies waves

of sound; the pinions of the bird imply an atmosphere, by beating of which with its wings the bird can raise itself aloft and float through space; the channels which pass through the trunk of the tree imply that the tree derives its moisture by suction from the ground; the web which the spider makes implies that the spider is intended to obtain its food by catching insects in that web. And so with the instincts of bees, and ants, and other creatures; they all prove, and are admitted to prove by the teachers of physical science, that there is something in Nature to correspond with them all. Man also has a number of instincts outside the requirements of his body, and by parity of reasoning they too must have their appropriate satisfaction. But they find no satisfaction in man's brief and chequered life on earth, if that life be all and there is no hereafter.

Let us consider some of these universal instincts; and let us begin with that of prayer. That is an instinct coextensive with the race. There is no tribe of men so low in the scale of being as to be absolutely destitute of the instinct of prayer. There is no race of man so degraded that in moments of anguish does not lift up beseeching eyes and imploring hands towards a Being able to hear and answer prayer. Now we know that every effect must have a cause. Is the polarity of

the magnet without a cause? Why does the magnet always point in one direction? Place a magnet in a pure void, in absolutely empty space, and the magnet will remain motionless. A compass will not move in an absolute void. Why? Because there is nothing there to attract it. The invariable movement, therefore, of the magnetic needle of the compass towards a certain point in space is proof positive that there is some object of attraction in that direction; if there were not, the compass would not always point that way. Now, if this life were all; if beyond this visible screen there was no Being to sustain, support, and comfort man, nothing but empty space, no voice nor any to answer—is it conceivable that men should in all ages and conditions have turned in moments of need towards an illusion; that they should have obeyed the spell of an irresistible attraction when in fact there was nothing to attract them? As well believe that there is nothing in space to attract the mariner's compass as that there is no God in the universe to attract the mariner's prayer. And the votaries of science themselves are of all others the men who ought to insist on this, who ought to repudiate the libel on the veracity of Nature implied in the belief that there is no God Who hears and answers prayer. Are we to conclude that Nature is a

true prophetess up to man, and that when he appears upon the scene she becomes a cruel syren, tormenting and mocking him with instincts and longings to which there are no corresponding objects? Plants and insects, birds and quadrupeds, do not seek in vain for the fulfilment of their desires. "Thou fillest all things living with plenteousness" is true of them all. Is man, the crown and paragon of Nature, the only one of her offspring who is to be sent empty away? They are not the truest and most reverent students of Nature who say so.

Another of the fundamental instincts of humanity is the practice of sacrifice, which includes two ideas: (1) man's confession of dependence on God for all that makes life possible and enjoyable; (2) his acknowledgment of guilt, involving forfeiture of life. In the former case the sacrifice is made from the stores with which human life is supported and embellished—mineral, vegetable, animal. In the latter we have the idea of expiation—life sacrificed for life, the innocent for the guilty. In Egypt the sacrificing priest pronounced the following imprecation on the head of the victim:—"If any evil is about to befall either those that now sacrifice, or Egypt in general, may it be averted on this head." The sacrificer's guilt and the punishment due to it were believed to be thus trans-

ferred to the head of the victim. Heads of animals were accordingly forbidden food in Egypt.[1] Associated with this idea of expiation by the immolation of an innocent life we find also the human craving for purity, for the washing away of moral defilement. This feeling was vividly symbolized by the Roman custom of sacrificing a bull and drenching the sacrificer in its warm blood, which was rained down upon him through a perforated platform covering the pit in which he received this baptism of blood—a baptism to which the Emperor Julian is said to have submitted in his vain endeavour to extirpate Christianity and restore Paganism. But men instinctively felt it to be "impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins." The human conscience suggested the imperative need of a more costly sacrifice. The distressed King of Moab spoke the fears of guilty man when he asked, in an ascending scale of terror: "Wherewithal shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before Him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"[2] Human sacrifices came

[1] Herod. ii. 39. [2] Micah vi. 6-7.

thus to be offered by the leading nations of antiquity—by the Phœnicians, Arabians, Greeks, Romans, Goths, as well as by the Mexicans. They were known in bright philosophic Athens in the noonday of her glory, and had not become obsolete in Rome for some time after the Christian era. Carthage, in the height of her commercial splendour, sacrificed children in crowds, and drowned their screams by the sound of music as they were flung into the flames. Perhaps the most striking evidence of man's yearning for expiatory cleansing is furnished by the extraordinary prevalence of the worship of Isis at the dawn of the Christian dispensation. The religions of Greece and Rome had lost their hold on those nations, mainly from their failure to meet man's craving for peace of mind and holiness of life. The worship of Isis offered what classic Paganism, on the whole, declined —expiatory cleansing of man's guilty conscience. Hence its rapid triumphs in Italy, Spain, Germany, France, and even in Britain, till Christianity dispossessed it by actually supplying what the ritual of Isis had only promised.

Thus we see that deep down in the heart of man there lies the ineradicable instinct of guilt and retribution with the consequent need of expiation and cleansing. Man has an intuitive sense of right and

wrong, and an internal monitor to warn him when he is tempted to prefer wrong to right. Nor is it of any avail to retort the various and sometimes contradictory notions of right and wrong which different nations, and tribes, and individuals may have. The answer is that all men agree in the fact that there are such things as right and wrong, though they may go astray in particulars. All accept the major proposition, that it is wrong to do certain things and right to do others, and only differ as to the minor—namely, what things are right and what wrong. The proverbial literature of nations is the concentrated essence of their experience and reflection, and every nation that has a literature has embodied its experience in some adage like our own "Murder will out"—meaning not so much that Nemesis will eventually overtake the criminal, as that an uneasy conscience will, as a rule, force him sooner or later to "make a clean breast of it." Shakespeare has given tragic expression to this instinct in the sleep-walking scene in "Macbeth," especially in the pathetic wail of the guilty Queen, that "all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand;" the truth, of course, being that the indelible stain was not on the hand, but on the self-accusing conscience.

Another of the universal instincts of humanity is

man's irrepressible thirst for knowledge—knowledge for its own sake. This love of knowledge on the part of man has been at the root of nearly all great discoveries and many noble achievements. What is it that has sent men in all ages across forbidding deserts and over inhospitable seas, or made them to pass toilsome days and sleepless nights in search of truth? Not the sordid love of money, nor even the nobler love of fame, but an unquenchable thirst for knowledge—the insatiable curiosity which differentiates man from the brute; that reluctance, in short, to accept the despairing conclusion of Agnosticism—man's individual annihilation at death—as the final portion of our race. But there is no satisfaction for that consuming love of knowledge here. The more man learns, the vaster looms in the distant haze the outlines of the fields of truth which still lie undiscovered before him. And then one day he dies, perhaps suddenly while still in quest of knowledge, and but a very short way on his journey. If Nature be a true prophetess there is a future life for man in which his thirst for knowledge will be satisfied. And what are we to say of man's love of beauty? That, too, is a dividing gulf between man and the lower animals. They appear to have no sense of beauty for its own sake. I say "for its own sake," because

there are undoubtedly some birds and other animals which exhibit a certain sense and love of beauty. But if you inspect it closely you will find that it is only an unreasoning instinct, given for a special purpose, and never passing beyond that purpose. It is an instinct specific in its scope, utilitarian in its aim, and temporary in its purpose. What animal has ever shown any sign of admiration of beautiful scenery, or beauty of any kind apart from one specific animal purpose? But man has a love of beauty for the mere sake of beauty. What is beauty? Where does it reside? In the perceived object or in the perceiving mind? A sunset makes precisely the same impression on the retina of the brute as on the human eye. But how different the result. When the image touches the eye of man it passes quickly through the optic nerve to the brain, and through the brain to the soul, and immediately a picture is presented to the mind which gives exquisite delight. Does not this clearly show, among other things, that this world is a sort of message to man from an intelligent Creator —a parable to teach him that the evanescent beauty of earth beckons him to a world where beauty does not fade. The existence in Nature of something that excites the sensation of beauty in man, and in him only, is surely a proof that Nature is the product of

an intelligent mind addressing itself to an intelligence that can understand the appeal and can recognize in the broken reflections of earthly beauty the love of One Who is the uncreated source of beauty. Man's love of beauty, however, like his love of knowledge, finds no satisfaction here. The beauty of earth blooms but to decay. Sorrow for the dead is also an instinct which no animal shares with man. Animals will fight and even die in defence of their young, but only while the offspring is growing and needs protection. When it has reached maturity it is no more to its parent than any other of its tribe, and when it dies the parent makes no lamentation over it. Not so man. When he has lost his beloved he does not resign himself to the parting as if it were eternal. A secret instinct whispers to him that it is but temporary; and his unquenchable hope finds expression in visible symbols. He raises monuments over the place where he has laid his dead, and places immortelles—unfading flowers—over their graves; for he believes that the treasure he has lost is garnered up elsewhere and that he will find it again. Mankind is thus typified by Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted because they are not. The refusal to be comforted is a protest against annihilation; it is the unreasoned wail of

an undying instinct that the missing children will one day be restored. Man soon learns to reconcile himself to the inevitable; but humanity has never acquiesced in death as its eternal doom.

Of all the spiritual instincts of man, however, perhaps the strongest is that which cries aloud for a Mediator. Man feels that the world morally is all awry; wrong unpunished and triumphant; right and innocence outraged and unavenged. We have a striking instance of this in the Book of Job. Some of Job's friends came to comfort him, and they urged him to confess that his calamity was a judgment upon him for some known or forgotten sin. They plied him with their platitudes and conventional morality. "Remember, I pray thee," said one of them, "who ever perished, being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off?" Job repels their accusations and rejects their reasoning with indignation, and he appeals to the experience of mankind. If his friends were right, let them tell him, "Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power? Their seed is established in their sight with them, and their offspring before their eyes. Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them. Their bull gendereth, and faileth not; their cow calveth, and casteth not her calf. They send

forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance. They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ." Job did not deny that he was a sinner or that sin merited punishment. But he did deny that he was a sinner above all men, and he rejected with scorn the comfortable doctrine of those who were not afflicted, namely, that prosperity meant innocence and suffering guilt. But how could he clear himself? It seemed to him that he had no chance. Nothing should destroy his trust in God; "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." But how could he plead with a Being in Whose eyes the very heavens were not pure, and Who could charge even His angels with folly? Job throws his argument into the form of a judicial trial, for the purpose of showing on what unequal terms the controversy must be conducted. Look at the end of the ninth chapter, and see how vividly this idea is brought out. "If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean; yet shalt Thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me. For He is not a man, as I am, that I should answer Him, and we should come together in judgment. Neither is there any daysman betwixt us that might lay his hand upon us both." There lay Job's difficulty and perplexity. There was no avenue of communion between himself and his

Almighty Judge. If, indeed, God had a human side to His nature, then Job might have a chance of being understood. Or since that could not be, if some daysman could be found, some arbitrator, a mediator "that might lay his hand upon us both," one who could span the chasm that divided the creature from the Creator, and with one hand touch human nature, with the other the Divine, thus bringing them together to interpret and explain them to each other—then, too, Job felt that it might be well with him. Job is here the representative of the ancient world, feeling its alienation from God, sinking beneath its accumulated woes, and groping about for a Mediator who should reconcile human nature with its Maker. The traditions of mankind bear witness to the universal consciousness of a Fall, the blight of some mysterious aboriginal catastrophe, under the shadow of which man now lies, exiled from a Golden Age which the race had once enjoyed, and bearing about with him in his inmost being an hereditary bias towards evil.

The article of the creed which deals with the Incarnation is the answer of Christianity to all these instinctive longings of humanity. It tells of a Divine Saviour, "the Desire of all nations," made Man "for us and for our salvation," Who came to be "the Way, the Truth, and the Life;" to satisfy man's thirst for knowledge

and craving for beauty; to comfort the mourners by bringing life and immortality to light, and to reconcile the creation with its Maker by incorporating with His Divine Person a nature which is in touch with created life in all its series from inorganic matter up to spirit. Men of science assure us that the lower forms of life are recapitulated in the human embryo, and St. Paul tells us that the whole creation is "recapitulated" in the Incarnation of the Son of God. Why, then, was the Incarnation necessary? Not, as has been sometimes supposed, to appease an angry Deity who could only be pacified by the endless torment of the race, or by the vicarious death of an innocent victim of infinite worth. The Son of God would have become incarnate, though without suffering or death, if man had never sinned; for without the Incarnation the gulf between the Creator and the creature could not have been bridged. Man's fall doubtless furnished an opportunity for the exercise of God's redeeming mercy through the Incarnation. God the Son became man to reconcile all creation with the Creator; and to do this in the case of fallen man, it was necessary to make him anew, to place, that is, a new organic force at the centre of his being, so that human life should thenceforward develop heavenward through sacramental union with the Second Adam instead of earthward, as

formerly, through its connection with the first Adam by natural generation. Twice, and twice only, throughout the long extent of human history, have the fortunes of our race been summed up and centered in a single person: the first time in Adam, who fell in Eden; the second time in Christ, Who in our nature conquered sin and death on Calvary and in Joseph of Arimathea's tomb. With these two fountain-heads of humanity we Christians are organically connected; and the connection is as real in the one case as in the other. Not by following the evil example set by our first parents are we ruined, as Pelagius erroneously taught, but by inheriting from them, through organic descent, a nature biased to evil. We are all conscious of this evil bias, and the transmission of moral as well as physical qualities, by descent through an ancestral line, is now one of the established facts of physiology and moral science. In like manner our redemption through Christ must also be through organic union with Him, and not by any mere imitation of Him, however close. His own language about the Vine and the branches has otherwise no meaning; nor has St. Paul's oft-recurring antithesis between the first Adam and the Second, the old Man and the New.

VI.

"AND WAS INCARNATE BY THE HOLY GHOST OF THE VIRGIN MARY."

MIRACULOUS BASIS OF CHRISTIANITY.

CHRISTIANITY rests on three miracles, which are absolutely essential to it—the miracles of our Lord's Conception, of His Resurrection from the dead, and of His Ascension into heaven. Get rid of any one of these miracles, and Christianity immediately collapses. It is necessary, therefore, to consider them carefully, and I will begin with the first, leaving the other two till we come to them in regular order. If I can show that physical science has no valid reason for rejecting the first I shall have blunted the edge of the attack on the others. The validity of the evidence belongs to another field of inquiry, into which I do not now enter, further than to express my conviction that no event in ancient history rests on better evidence than our Lord's Resurrection, from which His Ascension is a natural corollary. His miraculous Conception is obviously not amenable to the ordinary rules of

evidence—a defect which it shares with the paternity of every child of Adam. The only objection against our Lord's miraculous Conception with which it is possible to grapple is the physical one—namely, that it is opposed to the laws of Nature; and to that I confine myself.

In order, then, to get a clear idea of what is meant by our Lord's miraculous Conception, we must consider the relation of miracles in general to what are called the laws of Nature? What do we mean by a law of Nature? Is the miracle of our Lord's Conception opposed to any law of Nature or of the human understanding? I think I can give you some reasons for believing that it is not. Writers on physical science are in the habit of using law and cause as if they were interchangeable expressions. But in reality the laws of Nature are not causes at all in any proper sense of the word cause. By the laws of Nature we merely mean that certain phenomena are observed always to follow one another in regular sequence or order. If you analyze your own thoughts, you will find that you cannot dissociate the idea of causation from will; and it is this impossibility which has made men personify the forces of Nature under the name of laws, as if they were themselves causes. Plant a seed in the earth; after a time it strikes roots

downwards and pushes a sprout above the ground. What is the cause? It never occurs to you to believe that the earth caused it. Do you say that it was caused by a law of Nature? But what do you mean by that? Nothing more than that one fact has followed another fact in a certain order, and has always done so as far as human experience can testify. The fact is, physical science knows nothing of causation, nothing of the relation of cause and effect; what it knows is antecedent and consequent—a very different matter. It is an axiom in science that there is an exact equivalence between the effect and its cause, that there can be nothing in the effect which was not previously in its cause. You fire a bullet through the air, and you know that it will not go on for ever; that it will fall to the ground at the precise point where the force that expelled it from the gun has become exhausted; it cannot go a hair's breadth further; there is an exact equivalence between the expelling force and the result. But if you see a bullet hitting the bull's-eye of a target repeatedly, your reason tells you that there is no equivalence between the effect and the apparent cause: you see that there is more in the repeated accuracy of aim than the explosion will account for; that an accidental explosion of a bundle of cartridges would not send

bullet after bullet into the bull's-eye. You conclude, therefore, that the bullets were fired from a gun, and that the gun was directed by an intelligent will; and then you find an exact equivalence between effect and cause. You place a magnet and a piece of iron on a table, and you observe the iron moving towards the magnet. Why? You know that the iron does not move of itself like a slave obeying a master's look, and you know also that the magnet is as unconscious and senseless as the iron which it pulls. How then does it pull the iron? There is no visible or tangible connection. You say that the cause is attraction. But you explain nothing by saying that. Your explanation merely means that magnet and iron always act in that way towards each other. You feel therefore that there is more in the effect than the magnet will account for. There is no equivalence until you reach will. The constitution of your own mind tells you so. And so with regard to all the so-called laws of Nature. They are not causes at all in the scientific meaning of the word; they are simply observed sequences. In the strict sense of the word law has no self-executive force; it always implies a will behind it. It is the law of England that a murderer shall be hanged; but the law cannot enforce itself; apart from intelligent will it is

nothing. Similarly the laws of Nature require belief in a will behind them to account for them. Once admit the existence of such a will, and you cannot object to a miracle on the simple ground that it is a violation of natural law. For natural law is simply the expression of a Divine Will energizing in Nature. Take the origin of life, for example. None of the so-called laws of Nature will account for it. The doctrine of Biogenesis—that is, life from preceding life—is, by the admission of Professor Huxley, "victorious along the whole line." Professor Tyndall has demonstrated this conclusion by experimental evidence, and he has affirmed that to seek for "the promise and potency of all terrestrial life in matter" is to "cross the boundary of the experimental evidence," and fall back on the imagination. In other words, if we rely on scientific evidence we are forced back to a creative will as the explanation of the phenomena of life.

But if there is such a cause behind the forces of Nature, an ever-present Will of which they are merely the expression, surely it stands to reason that such a Power can manipulate His own forces—can vary their direction and their results. Antecedent objection is out of the question. It is a matter of evidence pure and simple in each given case. A miracle, bear in

mind, does not mean a violation, or even a suspension, of any natural law. I throw a stone into the air, and it goes up against the law of gravitation. But I do not thereby suspend, much less violate, the law of gravitation. It goes on all the same in its silent might and majesty. I force the stone against it for a short distance by my will acting through muscular energy. But I do not stop the law of gravity for an instant, any more than I stop for an instant the current of a river when I drive a boat against it by oar or steam. Now the question with regard to miracles is: Can will or spirit so act upon natural forces as to bring about results different from, and it may be contrary to, what would otherwise have happened? I have said on a previous occasion that man is a kind of god, a creator in a subordinate sense, "a creature, yet a cause." Can he do anything analogous to what we call a miracle? Let us think. A man imbibes poison. Leave the laws of Nature to take their course, and the man will die. But human will interposes, and applies an antidote which counteracts the action of the poison. No law of Nature is violated, but one natural force is made to correct the otherwise fatal effect of another. A ship is deserted and dismantled on the ocean. Left to the uncontrolled action of the laws of Nature, it will be engulfed

by the waves or dashed against the rocks. Again a human will intervenes, and by an arrangement of sails and rudder saves the ship by means of the very forces which, left to themselves, would have destroyed it. Electricity is a powerful force diffused in the air, and latent in various substances. Left to itself it acts blindly, and sometimes destructively. Man lays hold of it, imprisons it, lights his houses and streets with it, uses it like a beast of burden, and makes it a medium of communication in a moment of time between himself and his fellow-man on the other side of the globe. You read in history of districts which were formerly fertile and now are barren. What is the explanation? That men wantonly or ignorantly destroyed the woods which attracted the rain that fertilized the land. The influence of forests on climate is now one of the commonplaces of natural science. A suggestion was made some years ago to let the sea into the great desert of Sahara. Scientific men immediately sounded an alarm because, they said, the flooding of the Sahara would certainly alter completely the climate of Europe, and probably bring back the glacial period. Take another illustration—that of a man, nearly drowned, rescued in a state of unconsciousness. Leave him to the uncontrolled action of the laws of Nature, and he will inevitably

perish. But human will comes in, and restores life by manipulating forces which, left to their natural course, would destroy it. It is the same in the case of any bodily illness. Leave the sick man to the mercy of the forces of Nature and he will die. But the physician takes him in hand and reverses the process of dissolution. In all these and similar ways man can so manipulate the laws of Nature as to produce results other than would have followed from the laws of Nature left to themselves. As Bacon says, "Man obtains mastery over Nature by obeying Nature."

But if the laws of Nature are nothing but the expression of a supreme Will pervading and ruling Nature, obviously such a power may at discretion act directly—that is, without using any intermediate agency. That leads to the question whether will can really act upon matter directly. Undoubtedly it can. I raise my arm, and I do so by my will—by the direct action of spirit on matter. I may be told that the movement of my arm is really caused by the displacement of certain particles in my brain. Yes, but the change in my brain was itself caused by my volition. Moreover, will can act upon will, as the indisputable phenomena of animal magnetism show. But can will act at a distance, without contact? Not only can it do so, but in matter of fact all action is

really action at a distance. That is a comparatively modern discovery. Sir Isaac Newton, in his own line perhaps the greatest philosopher the world has seen, pronounced the suggestion of action at a distance, when first made, an "absurdity so great that no man, who has in philosophical matters a faculty of thinking, can ever fall into it." Twenty-five years afterwards the great philosopher, with fuller knowledge and a juster appreciation of the limits of human knowledge, preached the very doctrine which he had in his rashness denounced as an absurdity. "Have not then small particles of bodies," he asked, "certain powers, virtues, or forces, by which they act at a distance?" We are now all familiar with action at a distance in the influence of the moon on the tides, and of the heavenly bodies on each other, as well as with magnetic and other forces of attraction. But in the last analysis, as I have said, all action is action at a distance; there is no direct contact between bodies, great or small, that act upon each other. Go into the fields on a still sultry day in summer, when there is not a breath of wind to stir the air about you. All Nature seems asleep; the cattle lie slumbering in the shade; the birds are silent in the groves; not a leaf flutters in the woods; not a blade of grass waves in the meadow; there is apparently an entire absence of

life and movement. But if you had eyes that could penetrate through leaf and stem, through blade of grass, and soil, and rock, and if you had ears that could catch the secret harmonies of Nature, you would be amazed at the multitude of sights and sounds that would be suddenly revealed to you. You would find that there was no stillness at all in the landscape that erstwhile appeared to be so fast asleep. There is movement everywhere. The tree, whose leaves droop motionless in the noonday heat, and whose trunk stands erect against the sky, is throbbing with currents of life rushing through every pore. A stream of sap is coursing between bark and tissue, and millions of vesicles empty themselves every moment through all its leaves. There is not a blade of grass in the fields which is not palpitating with the life that is incessantly circulating through it. The earth beneath your feet, too, is being rapidly ploughed by numberless worms to make it fit for the husbandry of man. And not only so, but the most solid parts of the earth are in a state of perpetual unrest. I do not mean their motion through space together with our planet, although that also is sufficiently wonderful, when you reflect that we who are assembled just now in this building are — building and all — rushing through space at the rate of some nineteen miles a

second. What I mean is that there is not a stone in the Cathedral which is not in a state of constant internal agitation. Each stone is a conglomeration of innumerable atoms, all in vibration, and not one of them touching another. Even a polished bar of steel is composed of minute atoms permeated by currents of ether, and when you hear of steel and iron contracting or expanding according to the temperature, what is meant is that the component atoms recede from or approach each other. Touch they never do. Talk of the mysteries of faith! Why, we cannot move a step without stumbling against some mystery of science. But can man's will set God's will in motion, as in prayer? Certainly. There is a Latin proverb which says that "to labour is to pray," and, like most proverbs, it concentrates a volume of wisdom into a phrase. There is a close analogy between prayer and labour. You ask if man's will can set God's in motion. All the good we do or can enjoy comes really from God. "Every good gift," says St. James, "and every perfect gift, is from above and cometh down from the Father of lights." Our bountiful harvests come from God. But how do they come from Him? Not like the manna in the wilderness, without the co-operation of man. The earth will not yield her increase, will not yield the good

things which God has stored within her for man's use, unless man sets God's will in motion by his own labour. He must plough, and weed, and plant seed, and reap the golden harvest, else God's will on his behalf will not act. God has laid up in the bowels of the earth coal to give light and heat to man. But man must search for it, and with great toil draw it to the surface. The precious metals and costly gems are all obtained by diligent search and hard labour. It is God's will that man should possess them; but God's will would have remained for ever inoperative if man had not set it in motion by acting as its instrument. It is the same in the sphere of intellect and morals. Wisdom, learning, virtue, all come from God as their source; but they reach us mediately through services of mutual love. It is God's will that your children should be instructed in all things needful; but His will must remain unfruitful unless you do your part. Neither your prayer nor labour can change the will of God, for it is unchangeable. His goodness towards you must therefore remain inoperative unless you bring your own will into conformity with His, just as certain parts of the earth are always fast bound in frost and snow because they are turned away from the sun.

But it is said that a miracle would be a breach of

continuity in the order of Nature. Well, but are there not breaches of continuity in the world, as physical science has revealed it to us? What is the doctrine of evolution but a description of progressive changes marked by frequent breaches of continuity quite as great as any of the Christian miracles? According to that doctrine all the life on this globe is derived from a minute primordial life-cell. But that life-cell itself, the passage from dead matter to life, is a greater breach of continuity, a more stupendous innovation on the previous order of Nature, than a resurrection from the dead. The origin of life is more wonderful than its restoration in any particular organism. The passage from vegetable to animal life—assuming such passage for the sake of argument—was another enormous breach of continuity. The passage of one species into another—again assuming as a fact what is only so far a conclusion without verified premisses—was another serious breach of continuity. In plain truth, our belief in the continuity of the laws of Nature does not rest on reason at all, but on imagination. The order of Nature of which we have experience has lasted a long time, and we assume that it has lasted always and will last for ever. But this is a pure assumption. It is certain that the present order of Nature did not always exist, and that it will some day, however

distant, come to an end. One of the most dogmatic of the teachers of evolution[1] has not hesitated to say that our belief in the continuance of even "the laws of geometry and mechanics is an assumption we have no right whatever to make." The only fact continuous in Nature is the presence of its Creator and Ruler; and since it is indisputable that He has repeatedly innovated on existing order we have no ground in reason or in Nature to justify us in limiting His power at any given point in the evolution of His will.

Let us then apply what has been said to the case of our Lord's miraculous Conception. You may possibly be able to follow me more easily if we look at the question both in the light of the Mosaic account of man's origin and in that of the doctrine of evolution. The two accounts agree in one most important point, as I shall presently point out. Now, as regards the hypothesis of the transmutation of species—the change, that is, of one species into another, as of a fish into a bird—I have as a Christian no prejudice. How the question may eventually be settled is a matter of indifference to Christianity. For the doctrine of evolution can only deal with man's body. Physical science knows nothing and can know nothing of the

[1] The late Professor Clifford.

immaterial part of man; and the genesis of the human body, be it by special creation or by a long series of developments from lower forms of animal life, may be settled without the slightest prejudice to any article of Christian faith. Christianity comes in at the point where a body was prepared for a human soul capable of holding communion with its Maker. At the same time I must add that hitherto there is no conclusive evidence, nothing that could be admitted as evidence in an English court of justice, to support the theory of the transmutation of species. It is all based upon a series of ingenious assumptions and somewhat plausible guesswork. The believers in transmutation of species point to the similarity of pattern in the construction of man and of the inferior animals, and declare it to be "utterly inexplicable" upon any other hypothesis than that of a common ancestor. But that is an entire begging of the question. It is much more rational to believe that such a Being as we believe God to be would use a general plan of construction, and vary it in details to suit different species. In the works of God in Nature we observe an economy of power together with infinite adaptability in matters of detail. So much power is exerted as is needed; not a fraction more. Yet when more power is required it is at once

put forth to the full extent of the need. In works of human skill the highest genius is he who can thus economize power, who can fit a large number of species to one common pattern. But man through ignorance wastes much power in the process of invention. He achieves success after many abortive efforts. There is nothing tentative in God's work. His skill and power are always equal to the demand made upon them. In short, all the arguments used to prove transmutation of species are, to put it moderately, at least as valid in proof of special creations. Let me add, however, that by special creations I do not understand the special creation of each individual by a miraculous interposition of Divine power; I mean the creation of the type in each case, the descent being by evolution or development. But let us, for the sake of argument, assume that the doctrine of evolution in the sense of the transmutation of species is true. We are then confronted by two views of man's origin—the Mosaic account and the Evolutionist account. The Mosaic account of creation does not profess to be a scientific exposition. Its purpose is moral, and its references to the subject-matter of physical science are purely subordinate and subsidiary. At the same it is well to remember that eminent men of science, including

Buffon, have declared that man's creation as described by Moses is in substantial accordance with the facts of Nature.

Now, if you look at Gen. i. 2, you will find that the process there described is that of creation in the order of separate species—a type of each kind in its maturity, with reproductive power—"whose seed is in itself." And as a matter of fact that order is in accordance with the laws of thought. Logically the parent comes before the offspring. You must think of an oak before you get the idea of an acorn. According to the Mosaic account, the different species, man included, were created in their types, with power to reproduce their kind. And humanity is represented as unisexual at first, or rather as embracing the attributes of both sexes in a single personality. Adam had apparently the qualities of both sexes included in himself at his creation. The separation into two sexes took place afterwards. It is a curious fact that Plato suggests the same idea in one of his speculations on the origin of man. Was this an intuition of genius? or a primeval tradition floating down the stream of time? But let us see what the doctrine of evolution has to say on this subject. According to that doctrine, life started on its various peregrinations from a single germ, which gradually developed

into an organized being, male and female. There was therefore a long period of time during which life was propagated by a unisexual process; when the reproductive power energized and multiplied through a single stem. So far, then, the Mosaic account of man's origin and the Evolutionist account are in agreement. They differ as to the period at which the life which man shares with the brutes became bisexual; but they agree that at a stage in the development the reproductive power, which had included the properties of both sexes in one individual, parted into two sexes. But if that is so, what is there against reason or natural law in the belief that at another critical period in the evolution of the Divine will life should be transmitted through a single parent; that a new Head of humanity should be produced in a new way; that the moral entail of descent from Adam should in Him be broken; while the connection should remain intact through the female line in all that appertained to the essentials of humanity; the fecundating element being supplied direct by "the Lord and Giver of life"? Grant that God can dispense with means when He wills; that all life comes from Him; that the propagation of life was once unisexual; and you will see, I think, that there is nothing in our Lord's miraculous conception that need

offend our reason or that implies any violation of natural law. And, in truth, we have even at the present day, in the lower forms of life, instances of virgin births. We have it both in the vegetable kingdom and in the animal. I need only refer to working bees, which are now known to be the offspring of the female alone. It is hard that we should be put to the proof in this way in defence of one of the most sacred articles of our faith; but since we are put on our defence, it is well that we should be provided with an answer. Even Haeckel, a very aggressive evolutionist, who would probably not resent the designation of atheist, fully admits the fact of virgin births in the animal kingdom at the present day.

If God then deviates occasionally even now from the ordinary process of propagating life, why should it be thought a thing incredible that He did so on so momentous an occasion as the Incarnation of the Eternal Word? Judging by the history of man's original creation, by our Lord's life, and by what we are told of man's life in heaven, it would seem that the perfection of human nature lies in this union of the properties of both sexes in a single personality; the separation being only provisional and temporal. It does not exist in heaven. Our Lord tells us so distinctly. Human beings are to be "as the angels,"

"neither marrying nor given in marriage;" in other words, human nature will revert to its original type in Eden. And we have indications of this in the case of our Lord. Not only did He come into our world without the intervention of a human father, but it is evident from the Gospel history that He united in His humanity the attributes of both sexes in their integrity; the gentleness, the sympathy, the shrinking from impurity, the self-sacrificing tenderness which are characteristic of woman in her ideal state, together with the courage, the stern rectitude, the scorn for cant and hypocrisy which belong to the male sex in its best form. Both sexes, therefore, find their ideal in Him, and can approach Him with more than the confidence inspired by the best type of each sex on earth.

So much, then, as to the initial miracle on which Christianity is based. The Second Person of the Blessed Trinity "was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary; and was made Man." What do we mean by that? We do not mean that the Son of God took possession of an already existing person called Jesus of Nazareth, and filled him with Divine power; for in that case there would have been two persons, not one—the Second Person of the Trinity and the Son of the Virgin. We mean that the Eternal

Son of God, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, formed for Himself in the womb of the Virgin a human body and a human soul, with all the essential attributes belonging to each; but not a human person. He had thus, and has still, two natures—the Divine and human—united inseparably for ever in His Divine personality. He had two wills—the will of man and the will of God. The human will shrank from pain and prayed that the cup of agony might pass away, but submitted itself to the Divine will when it said, "Not My will, but Thine be done." He "grew in wisdom and stature"—that is to say, His body and soul, with the faculties belonging to each, were subject to the ordinary laws of growth and development.

VII.

"And was made Man."

SON OF MAN, NOT OF A MAN.

So far I have endeavoured to show that the doctrine of our Lord's miraculous Conception was not necessarily inconsistent with the teaching of physical science. We are now to consider more in detail what the doctrine implies. The creed tells us that He "was made Man." Not *a* man, you will observe. The distinction is vital. It was manhood, not *a* man; human nature, not a human person, that the Eternal Son of God took into union with Himself. But then it may be objected: If it be true, if it be really a fact that our Lord took human nature, lacking human personality, how can it be that His nature is the same as ours? The question bristles with difficulties, and it is impossible to answer it by a simple Yes or No. It is so easy on such a subject to suggest, without intending it, erroneous impressions to persons not familiarly acquainted with scientific theology, that

I must ask you to be so good as to give your closest attention to what I am about to say. It is then an article of faith that our Lord took human nature in its integrity, yet without a human personality. On the other hand, personality is an essential attribute of human beings. The two statements appear to be absolutely contradictory of each other. How shall we reconcile them? A closer examination will, I think, show that the contradiction is really on the surface only. Every kind of life may be regarded under two aspects: first, as a universal; secondly, as a collection of individuals, each of which possesses all that belongs to the definition of the universal. For example, if I were to ask any of you to define a tree, a horse, or a man, you would at once enumerate all those qualities which all trees, or all horses, or all men have in common; you would describe, in other words, the universal in each class, but you would not have any particular tree, or horse, or man, before your mind; you would describe the nature which each class possesses in common, without including the individual characteristics which distinguish from each other the members of the class. The universal of man is humanity, not any particular man; and this humanity existed in Adam in all those undeveloped potentialities out of which first came Eve, and then

the whole human race in its long line of separate personalities.

Now what was it that Adam transmitted to his descendants? Not his personality, for that was incommunicable. No human being can part with his own personality, or share it with another. We read that Adam begat sons and daughters—that is to say, that he passed on to his offspring his own nature in its fulness; but his personality remained exclusively his own for ever, and his descendants had each their own personalities. Thus we see that human nature is transmissible, but not human personality. In the case of every man and woman the nature derived from Adam is developed round a new personal centre. We are all one through our unity of race—that unity of nature which we have in common as children of Adam. On the other hand, we are all separate individuals through our possession of that sovereign principle of action in the soul to which we give the name of personality. Get that distinction clearly into your minds. By natural descent from Adam each of us possesses the integral essence of humanity; but this humanity is organized in every individual on a new personality not derived from Adam. Now what happened in the case of our Lord when He took human nature was this. In order to

cut off the entail of that tainted nature which we all derive by our conception and birth from our first parents, the germ of humanity which was derived from Adam through the Virgin Mary was vitalized, without the intervention of man, by the direct operation of the Holy Spirit, "the Lord and Giver of life;" and instead of being like ours centred in a new human personality, it was taken up into the Personality of the Eternal Word, the Second Person in the Blessed Trinity. So you see all the humanity that the first Adam passed on to his race was thus taken essentially by the Last Adam when He became man, sin only excepted; for sin is no part of human nature, it is only a flaw in it. It is a part, as we know only too well, of the human nature which we inherit; but that nature is a diseased nature, not the pure and flawless nature in which man was created in the beginning.

Was then our Lord's human nature precisely and without restriction the same as ours? Not altogether. Let me point out some very important differences. In the first place, our Lord had no human father, as I have just explained. In the second place, He had no human personality; His person was the Person of God the Son, Which took up into itself all the essential attributes of human nature, and united

them with the Divine nature for ever: both natures, however, though united, remaining severally distinct; there was no fusion, resulting in a fresh composite nature. Thirdly, our Lord was sinless by nature, and we come into the world sinful by nature; "by nature," says St. Paul, "we are all children of wrath." By nature our Lord was absolutely sinless, and that alone makes a vast difference between His nature and ours. In the fourth place, His knowledge and His sanctity were transcendent. He possessed foreknowledge. He knew beforehand the details of His own Passion, and that is one element of His self-sacrifice on earth which we are all a great deal too apt to forget. It is true in a large measure that for us ignorance is bliss. Human life would become intolerable if we knew beforehand not only its great tragedies and sorrows, but even the petty details and worries which encompass man's daily life; if every man could see clearly in prospect before him all the annoyances, troubles, and pains which are strewn along the path of every child of Adam through life. Our Lord did not enjoy this consolation; nothing took Him by surprise; no pain or agony came upon Him unawares; and the gospel narrative shows that His horror of His final conflict with the powers of darkness became sometimes so intense that it forced Him to rehearse it

beforehand to His disciples, as if yearning for the human sympathy which they were unable to give Him. He told them on the way up to Jerusalem before His Passion that He was about to be delivered to the Gentiles; to be buffeted, spat upon, put to death, and buried. There was thus a great difference between His human nature and ours, in that He, as man, possessed, within certain limits, a minute knowledge of His own future life. Then again, His body was different from ours in regard to corruptibility. Our bodies are liable to decay and corruption; but His knew no corruption: it was absolutely incorruptible; there was no element of disease in His nature. We read of His being hungry, thirsty, and weary, and of His needing rest and taking repose in sleep; but we never read of His being sick, for there was no element of decay or principle of dissolution in His human nature. And thus "death had no dominion over Him;" it was impossible that death should hold Him captive. "I lay down My life," He said; "no man taketh it from Me." St. Peter gives a striking expression to this thought when he tells the Jews that they had killed "the Prince of Life." The word in the original implies that Jesus was the Author and Ruler of Life, and suggests that the slaying of Him was not only a crime but a folly and an

absurdity, since "it was not possible that He should be holden of death"—He the Prince, Source, Leader from Whom all forms of life come. His body, moreover, had inherently health-giving and life-giving properties. We have several instances of this in the Gospels. We read that in curing a man born blind "He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay." Does not this imply some healing *nexus* between the cure and His sacred body? But we have much stronger instances than this. Look at the end of the fourteenth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel: "And when the men of that place had knowledge of Him, they sent out into all that country round about, and brought unto Him all that were diseased; and besought Him that they might only touch the hem of His garment: and as many as touched it were made perfectly whole." A more striking case still is that of the woman with the issue of blood. In preaching on that miracle lately, I pointed out the remarkable fact that mere contact with the hem of our Lord's garment, on the part of a patient in a state of high spiritual receptivity, extracted virtue from His sinless body without any previous knowledge on His part of what the woman had done. His body seems to have been so charged

with virtue, with the essence of life, that it discharged it like a shock of magnetism at the touch upon His clothes of the finger of a highly nervous and exalted faith. Now when you reflect that the germs of disease and death are derived from human bodies by contact with the clothes that cover them, there seems to be nothing unreasonable in believing that mere contact with the clothes of an absolutely pure human body, which was, moreover, united with a Divine Personality, attracted life-giving virtue. And as some human bodies are pre-disposed to disease, so doubtless bodies in a state of spiritual susceptibility would receive benefit when others not similarly affected would receive none. There are, indeed, indications scattered through the Bible that the human body in its ideal condition is endowed with the property of overcoming disease and even death. We have two remarkable instances of this in the Old Testament. You remember the story of Elijah raising to life the child of the widow of Zarephat. The prophet laid his own body three times on the body of the child, and by this contact, united with prayer, the child's life was restored. There is a very similar incident in the life of Elisha. When the bereaved mother told the prophet that her son was dead, Elisha gave his staff to his servant and

bade him lay it on the body of the child. The servant came back and reported that the child's life had not returned. The prophet himself then went to the chamber of death, and, like his master, laid himself upon the corpse and prayed, and this brought back the child's life. A still more extraordinary instance of the same kind is the restoration of a dead body to life through accidental contact with the buried corpse of Elisha, as related in 2 Kings xiii. 21. So in the New Testament we read that the sick were laid in the streets of Jerusalem in order that they might be cured by contact with the passing shadow of Peter. It is also recorded that cures were wrought by contact with aprons and handkerchiefs that had touched the body of St. Paul.

It seems then that the human body in a condition of transcendent sanctity has within it a disease-expelling virtue. But in human beings this virtue is exceptional and derivative, whereas in our Lord's body the virtue was original and normal; a fact which constitutes a very real difference between His body and all other human bodies. Then, again, consider His body after, and even before, His Resurrection. Before His death He emancipated Himself occasionally from the jurisdiction of the material world, and passed suddenly into the domain of the

spiritual. When the people of Nazareth, whom He had offended by His preaching, attempted to throw Him down headlong from the hill on which their town was built, we read that He "hid Himself," and so passed through the midst of them; that is to say, He made Himself invisible. In like manner He walked on the sea contrary to the law of gravity; and on one occasion He seems to have dispensed with the ordinary process of locomotion, for we read that on stilling a storm that had frightened His disciples on the lake they found themselves immediately at the place for which they were bound, apparently without traversing the distance in the ordinary way. His rule, however, before His Death, was to submit to the ordinary conditions of humanity. After His Resurrection He retired definitely into the spiritual realm, and came back into the sphere of matter on special occasions only, and then in a state of bodily independence of what are called the laws of Nature. He passed on Easter morning through the stone which closed His tomb, for the stone was not rolled away to let Him out—He had risen already—but to let the women in. On several occasions He appeared and disappeared suddenly, entering and passing out through closed doors; so that material obstacles could not bar or

impede His movements. Clearly then our Lord's humanity was different in several important aspects from ours. But it was perfect humanity for all that; more perfect in fact than ours. Indeed our own bodies after the Resurrection will differ very widely from our present bodies; yet they will remain essentially the same bodies. Their normal condition now is to be under the dominion of the laws of Nature. Their normal condition then will be subjection to the laws of spirit, which means emancipation from the laws of matter. As I have previously pointed out, the perfection of human nature seems to demand the inclusion in one personality of the characteristic qualities of both sexes, the separation belonging apparently to this temporal dispensation only. Certainly the first man, as we read his history in the Bible, was created with a nature which embraced the attributes of both sexes. Our Lord, the Second Adam, also possessed the characteristic excellences of both sexes in perfection. So that so far from being a nature less perfect than ours, His human nature is far more perfect, and therefore far more sensitive and sympathetic. The purer the nature, the more exquisite is its sensitiveness, the more responsive its sympathy.

Another proof that our Lord's humanity was more

perfect than ours is the absence in Him of what we call character. All men and women have some special characteristic; one is brave, another humble, another patient, and so forth. Moses was the meekest of men, Solomon the wisest, Job the most patient. What does that mean? It means that those qualities predominated over the rest of the character in their respective possessors. But the predominance of any special quality is a mark of imperfection. The perfection of man's constitution is to have its qualities in equipoise; each in its proper place; each coming to the front when required; but none overshadowing the rest. Read the history of Christ as you find it in the Gospels, and you will see that one of the most wonderful things about it is this absence of any special characteristic. All His intellectual and moral faculties are in perfect equilibrium. Each was in its proper place, each asserted itself when necessary, just to the extent required, and not a jot beyond. He was the bravest of men when bravery was required; the meekest when meekness was needed; the most indignant when the occasion demanded indignation; the most merciful where mercy was deserved. But there was no special quality which distinguished Him; no particular attribute which dominated the rest of His human nature. Another

thing worthy of notice is the title, "Son of Man," which our Lord so constantly applies to Himself. He never claimed to be the son of a man; He owned no filial relationship to any human father; on the contrary, He disclaimed such relationship. When His mother said, "Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing," He corrected her immediately with the significant question: "How is it that ye sought Me? Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" A clear intimation that Joseph was not His father. And therefore in calling Himself the "Son of Man" He indicated that the nature which He took from the Virgin was generic, not particular; the nature of the race, not of any individual member of it. The title thus denotes a relation with humanity which is at once universal and personal. The nature He took is coextensive with the race; and that nature is united to, without being absorbed into, His Divine Person. And see how He uses that glorious title of "Son of Man" to accentuate the strange contrast of the life of man on earth with every other form of life in the world of Nature. "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." The lower animals find their homes here—homes suited to their natures and adapted to their requirements;

but "the Son of Man," the God-Man, the Representative of universal humanity, "hath not where to lay His head." This world is not man's home. It offers him no resting-place. It leaves him ever unsatisfied, promising well, but never fulfilling. And as the title of "Son of Man" implies that it was the seed of the race which He took, this fact is emphasized in another place where it is said that He was "made of a woman," excluding by implication any human paternity. Our Lord then emphatically claims to be in a unique sense at once the Son of God and the Son of Man: a circumstance which arrested the keen eye of a French writer, whose remarkable testimony I will quote—remarkable because he is an unbeliever in Christianity; I mean the well-known author, Renan. His words are: "It is probable that from the first He regarded His relationship with God as that of a son towards his father. This was his great act of originality; in this He had nothing in common with His race."

And now I am going to make a remark which may startle some of you. It is this: If our Lord was not more than man, He was less than a good man. Either He was God, or He must cease to be our Pattern Man, the great Exemplar of our race. My reason for saying this is that Jesus makes claims

which would have been arrogant and blasphemous as coming from a mere man. Read the lives of the great teachers of mankind as they emerge upon the page of history: Gautama, for example, the founder of Buddhism, and Socrates, the great moral teacher and philosopher of Greece. Neither of them makes any claim to sinlessness or moral perfection. On the contrary, they bewail their ignorance, their sinfulness, their manifold inperfections. Of all the great moral teachers of the ancient world outside the Bible the founder of Buddhism comes in some aspects of his character nearest to the impression left upon our minds by the study of the life of Christ. But Gautama had revelled in gross sensuality during the earlier part of his life; and it was after a surfeit of self-indulgence that he turned over a new leaf and became an ascetic and a great preacher of self-denial and righteousness. He frequently proclaims and bewails his own sinfulness, and seeks salvation for himself as well as for others. The figure of Socrates, too, grandly as it stands out amidst the seething moral corruption of the most brilliant period intellectually of Athenian history, was by no means faultless. Nor does he claim any distinction above his contemporaries, except that he knew his own ignorance while they were ignorant of theirs, and that he was

always obedient to a mysterious voice which warned him on critical occasions. He makes frequent confession of transgressions against the moral law, and keeps himself always on a level with other men. What is true of Gautama and Socrates is true of all other great teachers, Pagan, Jewish, or Christian. They acknowledge their kinship with other men not only in race, but in the moral imperfections which characterize the race, and in the need of salvation from a source higher than man. Not so Jesus of Nazareth. He claims an unique distinction, an unapproachable superiority over every other member of the human family. His teaching abounds in lofty self-assertions which are utterly incompatible with His being simply an ordinary man; and never once does He suggest that Himself needs redemption. Let us take a few instances:—"Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man. And yet if I judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent Me."—"I am one that bear witness of Myself, and the Father that sent Me beareth witness of Me."—"Then said they unto Him, Who art Thou? And Jesus said unto them, Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning."—"Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love Me; for I proceeded forth and came from

God; neither came I of Myself, but He sent Me."—"Which of you convinceth Me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe Me?" There, you see, He challenges conviction of sinfulness—so different from all other human teachers. Again, in the same chapter He says, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day: and he saw it, and was glad. Then said the Jews unto Him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am." The expression "I am" is remarkable and significant; it means Jehovah, the great Name which God had revealed as His peculiar designation to Moses on Mount Horeb. Here Jesus asserts His right to appropriate it. He does not say, "Before Abraham was, I was," but "I am," that is, "I am the self-existent One, independent of time, with Whom is no past or future, but one vast present." Again, in the tenth chapter of St. John, He says, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand. I and My Father are one." These are assertions which no mere man, who was

also a good man, would dream of making. It follows that those who deny our Lord's Divinity, and yet set Him forth as the best specimen of our race and a model worthy of being copied to the end of time, are in an inextricable dilemma. For if He is not God there is a deadly flaw in His character. Admit His Divinity, on the other hand, and you will find His life and teaching harmonious and flawless.

But if our Lord's humanity was so exceptionally perfect—a humanity, moreover, united with a Divine Person—how can He be an example to us? And how could He have been tempted at all in any real sense? For remember that our Lord not only did not yield to the temptation; He could not have yielded. He was not only impeccant, but impeccable. Not only was He sinless in fact, but He could not by any possibility have committed sin. How then could He have been tempted? You must try to follow me in what I am going to say: otherwise you may carry away erroneous impressions. Bear in mind then that although the nature that was tempted was human, the Person who was tempted was God; and God cannot sin. But in that case how could His temptation have been real and His triumph over temptation be an example to us?[1] In order to get over that difficulty, you must

[1] An accomplished friend, to whom I have already owned my indebtedness, has made the following criticism on the explanation

remember, in the first place, that temptation covers a wider sphere than sin. To be tempted is not neces-

here offered of our Lord's temptation :—" This explanation does not seem to me satisfying. To a person 'not only impeccant, but impeccable,' there might have been *suggestion* of sin, but surely no temptation, no trial or struggle. Struggle comes in when there is possibility of yielding. The rock makes no effort against the stone that has been hurled at it but cannot injure it; and without effort, struggle, the experience must be imperfect. Surely the temptation was real, and would have been no temptation if there had been no possibility of yielding." I perceive the difficulty, and I venture to suggest the following solution. We know that our Lord's human nature in all its parts was subject to the ordinary laws of development, and among them to the limitations of human knowledge, including self-knowledge. Consequently it does not follow that Jesus was, as man, absolutely conscious beforehand that He would not have given way to the temptation. His Incarnation was a true κένωσις (Phil. ii. 7) of the attributes of the Divine Nature. It was as man that He fought and won. It is of course true that in virtue of the Hypostatic Union there could be no real separation between the two Natures; but the human nature was left to its own free self-determining efforts towards moral perfection. We read more than once of our Lord's praying to His Father; also of His human weakness, such as His shrinking from death, and from solitude when in anguish of soul. There is a pang of disappointment in the words, "What, could ye not watch with Me one hour?" To which may be added that moment of mysterious obscuration on the Cross when His Father appeared to have forsaken Him. It was because His knowledge as man was human and not divine that temptation was possible to Him, and victory, and increase of moral strength. In meeting temptation there was in his human will room for alternatives, and He had to make a deliberate moral choice. Think of His prayer among the olives of Gethsemane: "And He went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him. And He said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto Thee; take away this cup from Me: nevertheless not what I will, but what Thou wilt."

sarily to sin. An act of sin comprises three distinct stages. First, the sin must be suggested to the mind either by a natural impulse or by some external tempter. In the second place, the person tempted must take a pleasure in the sin; he must, so to speak, walk round it and contemplate it, and give it a lodging. In the third place, he consummates the anticipated pleasure in the self-indulgent act. In the mere suggestion of temptation to the mind there is no sin.

Who can fail to see here a real temptation, a real struggle, and a real victory? Uncertain which way the Divine will might lead, instinctively clinging to the Divine gift of life and shrinking with horror from the inexperienced crisis of death, there was room for solicitation to Him with Whom all things were possible. But the Father gave no sign of release, and the Son of Man went steadily forward to meet His doom. There was room for resistance and decision when no gleam of light came to show that the dark road might be shunned. It was this liability to inward balancing of alternatives, and the conscious need of strength to fulfil His mission, that made the prayers of Jesus possible, and so real and persistent. *We* know that His choice must always in the end have been the right choice. It does not follow that it was in every case clear to Him at the moment what the right choice was, further than the determination in the last resort to subdue the promptings of the human will to the decrees of the Divine. We must be very careful that, while we insist on the reality of our Lord's Divinity, we do not encroach on the integrity of His Humanity, of which moral perfection through free choice and self-determined effort is a necessary predicate. His two natures, though inseparable, are distinct, and neither must be thought of as infringing any of the prerogatives of the other.

I have considerably altered the passage in the text to meet my friend's objection. But I leave the objection, to enable me to explain my meaning more fully in a note.

There is no sin in being tempted; but the moment you begin to take pleasure in sin, the moment you give an evil suggestion, knowing it to be evil, a lodging in the mind, that moment sin enters; and its consummation in act is pretty certain to follow speedily. In our Lord's case only the first could take place; sin could be suggested to His mind. Now, with regard to the triple temptation recorded in the Gospels—a temptation addressed to the three avenues of man's nature—body, soul, and spirit; in other words, sensual, moral, and intellectual—it is to be observed that there was nothing wrong in the appeal which the Tempter made to the natural craving of our Lord's tripartite humanity. Our Lord was hungry after His long fast, and felt the ordinary pangs of hunger and the natural desire for food; and there was no sin in seeking to gratify His appetite. Sin would come in if He entertained the idea of satisfying the craving for food in an illegitimate way. He came to set an example of total self-sacrifice. He came to lay down, and teach, and exemplify in His own Person, the law of entire unselfishness in opposition to the law of self-will and self-indulgence, which followed from the fall of Adam. To satisfy His hunger would have been lawful if there had been food at hand. But to have turned stones into bread would have been unlawful for two reasons.

First, because it would have been a violation of natural order, which our Lord's miracles never were. When He multiplied loaves or fishes, or turned water into wine, He was acting on the lines of His ordinary Providence, and simply dispensing with intermediate processes. He multiplies bread and fishes every year through secondary agencies, and every year He turns water into the raw material of wine by the secret chemistry of nature. But to have turned stones into bread would have been a wanton violation of the order which He has established in the world. In the next place, Christ never worked any miracle on His own behalf except when He saved the people of Nazareth from the crime of putting Him to a violent death before His hour was come. He lavished His miraculous power on others: He never used it to save Himself trouble or pain. The Tempter's suggestion was thus an invitation to violate His own order in the world of Nature, and to do this in opposition to the law of self-renunciation which He taught and practised. Had He yielded, He would have made the Kingdom of the Messiah a carnal and self-seeking dominion, and would have proclaimed to the world that man's life consists in the gratification of his animal appetites. In opposition to this suggested rule of life He appealed to the supernatural life of the Israelites in the

wilderness, where they were sustained by the direct bounty of God; the very clothes they wore being exempted from the ordinary law of decay. But there was nothing wrong in feeling the pangs of hunger and wishing to appease them. And so as regards the other two temptations, at which I can only glance rapidly for lack of time. There was nothing wrong in the suggestion that our Lord should take possession of the kingdoms of the world. That was His heart's desire. He came on earth to bring the kingdoms of the world under His righteous rule. The desire was natural and praiseworthy. The sin would have been in gratifying it prematurely, and by an act of homage to the devil. Nor would it have been sinful to fly to the ground from the pinnacle of the Temple for a legitimate purpose. But to have done so by way of theatrical display in proof of His Messiahship would have been a sin. In all the temptations you will observe the ends which the tempter proposed were good and desirable; it was the means which he suggested that were sinful. Nor was there any sin involved in the mere temptation—the mere suggestion of an end in itself desirable. The temptation glanced off our Lord's pure soul without leaving a stain.

But how then can He be an example to us when we

are tempted? Let me try to explain it. Our Lord desired intensely the ends proposed by the Fiend—they were good ends; and the delay, for example, in bringing the kingdoms of the world under His sway was a real grief to Him. He would gladly have abridged the time if that could have been done in accordance with Divine laws and purposes. But I have said that our Lord could not have sinned; and that seems to make His temptation unreal. But does it? Think for a moment. You have a friend, a man whom you know well, in whose honour and integrity you have perfect confidence. Your friend unexpectedly finds himself in a great difficulty. Various alternatives present themselves to his mind, and he undergoes a painful struggle. But you feel absolutely certain that when the path of duty is made quite plain to him he will follow it. Yet the temptation has been a very real one, and while the crisis was upon him your friend himself was probably uncertain what his choice would be. Or you have heard, known, or read of pure women who have been placed in a cruel dilemma; the sacrifice of honour, or of the life of husband or child by violence or starvation. Again the temptation is sore though the sin be hateful. There may be for a while a conflict between what natural or conjugal affection may disguise in the garb of opposing duties. Shall

she sacrifice her honour to save a life dearer to her than her own? Or shall she sacrifice that life to save her honour? On reflection she prays the prayer of Gethsemane—"Not what I will, but what Thou wilt." She must not do evil that good may come. Death is not necessarily an evil at all—it may be a good; but voluntarily to violate, on any plea, the law of chastity must always be a sin. Here, too, the temptation was real, though to a higher intelligence the issue may not have been for a moment doubtful. Of course we could not demonstrate with absolute certainty of any human being beforehand that he or she would not yield to any particular temptation, however certain we might feel morally. But we might be able to do so if we could see into the inmost recesses of character, as possibly intelligences of a higher order than ours are able to do. In like manner, angels probably knew then, as we know now, that Jesus must in the end have triumphed over every temptation. But it is not necessary to believe that the issue was always equally clear to His own human soul in every stage of the conflict. He "emptied Himself" of His Divine power when He became man; that is, He withdrew His human nature from the shield of the Divine Personality, and fought temptation in all its forms as Man; just as He learnt to walk, and read, and write, like

any other child, without any aid from His Divine nature. In truth, the moral development of all finite natures arrives at last at a point where temptation ceases to have any power. The angels who kept their first state have their wills so set on the right side that they can no longer sin. So, too, will it be with men who have passed successfully through their moral probation. The same law, indeed, prevails in all organic growths; the life reaches at last a point when it takes a set which cannot be changed. That our Lord's temptations were intensely real, more real and searching than any temptation before or since, there can be no question—and Holy Scripture bears emphatic testimony to the fact. "The Captain of our salvation" is said to have been made "perfect through suffering." And in the Epistle to the Hebrews we read: "For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all things tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Again: "Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted." Not only was He tempted, you see, but His tempta-

tion was a sore trial to Him, inflicting keen suffering, but disciplining and developing His moral nature in the process.

Now let me try to sum up in a few words what is actually involved in the union of the Divine and human natures in our Lord's single Person. In virtue of that union, called in theological language the Hypostatic Union, it is allowable to predicate of Christ's Person in the abstract the properties which belong in the concrete to either of His natures. Let us take some illustrations. I may possibly shock some of you by saying that the Virgin Mary may properly be called "Mother of God;" yet that is the title given her by the Œcumenical Council of Ephesus —one of the Councils accepted by the Church of England. You must understand the term with its proper theological limitations. Of course it would be monstrous and blasphemous to assert that the Blessed Virgin was the mother of our Lord's Godhead. Nevertheless she may properly be called Mother of God because she is mother of that Single Person Who was in His human nature born of her; and to deny her that title, as Nestorius did, is in fact to deny that the child born of her was God. In the same sense St. Paul speaks of "the Church of God which He purchased with His blood"—that is, the blood of God.

And the mother of John the Baptist calls the Virgin "the mother of my Lord." We may therefore apply to Christ's Person all the acts and attributes which severally belong to either of His natures. We may say that God was laid in a manger, was weary at the well of Jacob, died on the Cross, was buried in Joseph of Arimathea's tomb; meaning of course that Christ, Who is both God and Man, underwent all this. On the other hand, we may say that Man overcame death, saved mankind, and reigns in heaven; meaning the Man Christ Jesus, Who did all this in His Divine Personality; just as He once spoke of Himself while still on earth as "the Son of Man Who *is* in Heaven." I will conclude with a quotation from Richard Hooker,[1] "the judicious Hooker," as he has been called, to show you that the doctrine which I have been teaching you is true Church of England doctrine: — "But that the selfsame Person Which verily is man should properly be God also, and that by reason not of two persons linked in amity, but of two natures, human and Divine conjoined in one and the same Person, the God of Glory may be said as well to have suffered death, as to have raised the dead from their graves; the Son of Man as well to have made as redeemed the world,—Nestorius in no case

[1] *Eccl. Pol.*, Bk. v., lii.

would admit. That which deceived him was want of heed to the first beginning of that admirable combination of God with man. 'The Word (saith St. John) was made flesh, and dwelt in us.' The evangelist useth the plural number, men for manhood, us for the nature whereof we consist, even as the Apostle, denying the assumption of angelic nature, saith likewise in the plural number He took not angels but the seed of Abraham. It pleased not the Word or Wisdom of God to take to itself some one person amongst men, for then should that one have been advanced, which was assumed, and no more; but Wisdom to the end she might save many, built her house of that nature which is common unto all; she made not this or that man her habitation, but dwelt in us. The seeds of herbs and plants at the first are not in act, but in possibility, that which they afterwards grow to be. If the Son of God had taken to Himself a man now made and already perfected, it would of necessity follow that there are in Christ two Persons, the one assuming, and the other assumed; whereas the Son of God did not assume a man's person into His own, but man's nature to His own Person; and therefore took *semen*, the seed of Abraham, the very first original element of our nature, before it was come to have any personal human

subsistence. The flesh and the conjunction of the flesh with God began both at one instant; His making and taking to Himself our flesh was but one act, so that in Christ there is no personal subsistence but one, and that from everlasting. By taking only the nature of man, He still continueth one Person, and changeth but the manner of His subsisting, which was before in the mere glory of the Son of God, and is now in the habit of our flesh. Forasmuch, therefore, as Christ hath no personal subsistence but one, whereby we acknowledge Him to have been eternally the Son of God, we must of necessity apply to the Person of the Son of God even that which is spoken of Christ according to His human nature. For example, according to the flesh He was born of the Virgin Mary, baptized of John in the river Jordan, by Pilate adjudged to die, and executed by the Jews. We cannot say properly that the Virgin bore, or John did baptize, or Pilate condemn, or the Jews crucify, the nature of man, because these all are personal attributes; His Person is the subject which receiveth them, His nature that which maketh His Person capable or apt to receive. . . . Whereupon it followeth against Nestorius that no person was born of the Virgin but the Son of God, no person but the Son of God baptized, the Son of God condemned, the Son of God and no other person crucified."

VIII.

"AND WAS CRUCIFIED ALSO FOR US UNDER PONTIUS PILATE; HE SUFFERED AND WAS BURIED."

THE ATONEMENT.

THE article with which I am to deal to-day is that which describes our Lord's Passion, Death, and Burial. It is the part of the creed which deals with the doctrine of the Atonement. Now what do we mean by the doctrine of the Atonement? Various views have been put forward on this subject, but I do not think it necessary to-day to discuss more than two of these. One view represents the doctrine of the Atonement somewhat as follows:—That when man fell he brought complete ruin on his race; that human nature was entirely and absolutely vitiated by the Fall; that it was not merely disorganized—its bond of unity being broken by the severance of the human will from the Divine—but that it became wholly and absolutely evil, not a single element of good being left in it. And not only so, but, in addition, all men became criminals

through Adam's guilt, and the successive generations who are thus born into the world are justly liable to an immortality of torture; all except a comparatively small number who have been predestinated to eternal happiness, and for whom alone Jesus Christ made atonement. This doctrine, moreover, represents God the Father as a Being whose majesty was so offended by Adam's sin that nothing would appease Him but the death of His own innocent Son. A ransom had to be paid of a value beyond anything that man could offer, and the Eternal Son accordingly offered Himself to His offended Father as a substitute for guilty man; and for His sake, thus dying in man's stead, God was satisfied, and an atonement was made for the elect. Surely this is a doctrine very derogatory to the nature of Almighty God. Observe, in the first place, that it represents human nature as wholly and completely evil in consequence of Adam's fall. But that is not the doctrine of the Bible, which represents the Divine Image in fallen man as marred, but not entirely effaced. St. Paul says that "we have all sinned, and come short of the glory of God;" come short, you see, not entirely lost. Had man's nature become absolutely sinful, God the Son could not have become incarnate; He could not have taken a sinful nature into union with His Divine Person.

Next, the doctrine on which I am commenting implies a difference of moral character in the Trinity. God the Father is represented as so offended with the human race that He could only be reconciled by the voluntary sacrifice of His Son; as if the Father and Son had contrary feelings towards mankind; the Father, a severe Sovereign Who would not forgive without a ransom; the Son, a compassionate Saviour Who offered His life to redeem humanity. The Father would thus be less loving than the Son, which of course is heresy. God the Father is, moreover, represented as indifferent to the guilt or innocence of the victim, provided only that the payment be equivalent to the debt. The innocent suffered for the guilty, and His righteousness is imputed to sinful man, who is thus accounted, not made, righteous. The righteousness which man obtains through Christ does not enter into the tissue of his own being, does not become part of him, does not circulate through his spiritual veins as the sap of a healthy tree circulates through the fibres of the sickly sprout which is grafted upon it. It is an external garment which "skins and films the ulcerous sore," leaving the putrid matter still festering within. But what man needs is to have the sore healed, to have the poison rooted out, to have his nature renewed, to be placed in com-

munication with a fresh and pure fountain of life. He requires to be made, not simply to be accounted, righteous. It is with no mere imputed sin and guilt that he comes into the world, but with a real heritage of woe—a will biased to evil, and a conscience which bears witness to ancestral guilt. It is, therefore, by no mere imputed righteousness that he can be saved. Christ's atonement is not a substitution for man's righteousness, but the source of it, bringing him into organic relation with the redeemed humanity of God the Son. So much then as to that view of the Atonement which regards human nature as wholly evil and the righteousness of Christians as imputed, not organic; an external endowment, not an internal principle of sanctity. I believe the view which I have been criticising to be as false as it is certainly comparatively modern.

What, then, is the true view of the Atonement? It embraces, as I conceive, two ideas: first, the union of the creation as a whole with the Creator—the bridging of the chasm that had divided the finite from the Infinite; secondly, the reconciliation of mankind, sinful and exiled, to their heavenly Father. Let us glance—for there is no time for more—at these two ideas respectively. Atonement, as you know, means at-one-ment, bringing into harmony again, into unison

and agreement, persons or parties who were at variance and apart. How does this apply to the reconciliation of the Creator with His creation? By what atonement can they be brought together? Let us think. One of the most striking facts revealed to us by modern science is the wonderful and mysterious unity which pervades the universe and binds all its parts together. There is nothing isolated. All the forces of Nature are correlated. The stellar systems that fill infinite space are bound together in all their parts, and are ceaselessly acting upon and influencing each other: planets revolving round their suns, satellites revolving round their planets, and vast solar systems, with their separate hierarchies of planets, moving and controlling each other. Nor is it only in the interdependence of the huge masses of the universe that we find this law of unity, this mutual action and counteraction, prevailing; it binds together the minutest atoms, regardless of distance and intervening obstacles. Every atom in the universe is so closely connected with every other atom, and is so affected by it, that we may say there is a kind of cognizance of each other, a sort of mutual sympathy. Man longs to be independent, but it is a vain dream. There is no independence in the universe. All its parts are correlated, and the whole is sustained by the re-

ciprocal services of the parts. "One deep calleth another," and one atom attracts another on opposite sides of the globe. This is not a figure of speech, but a literal matter of fact. Let me quote one of our leading men of science: "To gravity," he says, "all media are, as it were, absolutely transparent, nay non-existent, and two particles at opposite points of the earth affect each other exactly as if the globe were not between. To complete the apparent impossibility, the action is, so far as we can observe, absolutely instantaneous, so that every particle of the universe is at every moment in separate cognizance, as it were, of the relative position of every other particle throughout the universe at the same moment of absolute time."[1]

This great law of the mutual interdependence and reciprocal action of the various parts of the universe was present to the mind of the great Apostle of the Gentiles, only he looked behind material forces to the spiritual Power which wields and controls them. In St. Paul's view matter was no dead thing, having no kind of relation to man or God; on the contrary, he regarded the universe as one vast whole, differentiated by hierarchies of being, from inorganic matter up to angelic life, and

[1] Jevons's *Principles of Science*, vol. ii. p. 144.

all embraced in the atonement of the God-Man. In the eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans he pictures "the whole creation" as "groaning and travailing in pain together until now," and waiting to share in the redemption of the human race. You will find a still more striking passage in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Colossians, where the Apostle represents the whole creation, angelic, human, animate and inanimate, as having a part in Christ's atoning sacrifice. You must have the whole passage before you in order to appreciate its meaning in all its range and depth. He speaks of God the Father as having "delivered us from the power of darkness, and translated us into the Kingdom of His dear Son, in whom we have redemption through His Blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of all creation: for by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him. And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the Church: Who is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the pre-eminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness

dwell; and having made peace through the Blood of His Cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven."

Try to follow out St. Paul's argument in that passage. God the Father, you will observe, is not represented as an angry Deity between whose wrath and the guilty race of man the Divine Son interposes as an adequate victim. On the contrary, Father and Son are portrayed as co-operating in loving harmony for the redemption of man and the atonement of all creation. The initiative in this work is given to the Father as the fount of Deity—the initiative not in time, but in the internal relations of the Trinity. It is God the Father Who "hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light," and "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness." And this He has done through the mediation of the Son of His love. The Father is personally invisible. He is to be seen only in the Son, "Who is the image of the invisible God," and "the Firstborn of all creation," as being the efficient and formal cause whereby the creation was born into a Divine adoption. The Apostle then goes on to show how Christ, by means of His creative and mediatorial office, has brought the whole creation, "visible and

invisible," within the sphere of His atoning work; not "thrones" merely, or "dominions, or principalities, or powers," or "the Church," but "all things," "whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." "For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell"—that the Son, in other words, should by His Incarnation comprehend in Himself the whole universe of being.

Let us see how this can be. And let us begin by considering man's relation to the rest of created life. Man came last in the order of creation; in that the conclusion of science agrees with the Mosaic cosmogony. Man was thus intended to be the copula that should unite the lower creation with the highest form of created life, namely, the angelic. He was in touch with all—with inorganic matter, with vegetable and animal life, and with the nature of angels. Physiologists tell us that man in the early stages of his development passes through all the forms of life inferior to his own. His body is allied to the dust of the ground. He takes up vegetable and animal life and transmutes them into his own higher life, and the lower types of life are thus represented parabolically, as it were, in the human embryo. Now look for a moment at the typical characteristic of the different strata of life. The lower the life is, the

more material are its gratifications. In vegetables the material appetite is everything. The vegetable fulfils the end of its being best when it most freely takes and uses all the matter it can assimilate. Animals possess a higher life than vegetables. They have a kind of spontaneity, possess an inferior form of soul endowed with emotion, and have a limited and circumscribed intelligence. Their life is chiefly material, and they live mainly for the gratification of their appetites; but not altogether. They have an inchoate soul which needs a higher kind of life to change animal into person. Man, as I have said, is related through his body to inorganic matter, and to vegetable and animal life; but he is still more closely related to animal life through his soul. So far as man consists of body and soul only his life is merely that of the brute. But God "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul"—a being endowed with reason, conscience, capacity of self-sacrificing love—the "perfect love which casteth out fear." Through His spirit man is related to the angelic order, and is enabled to hold communion with God. Man was thus created to be the *nexus* between the highest and lowest forms of created life. The animals were brought to him in Paradise, and he classified them. Dominion was

given him over the lower creation, and if he had kept his innocence and perfected his character by self-conscious discipline, the Son of God would still have become Incarnate, but without need of Cross or Passion. When man fell, however, he broke the unity and harmony of creation, and the lower elements of his nature soon began to triumph over the higher. The animal soul, with its brutal appetites, "pressed down the incorruptible spirit," as the son of Sirach says. Intellectual development was of no avail when spirit was dethroned, for the intellect became enlisted in the service of the animal appetites.[1]

Now let us go back to the great passage on the Atonement in St. Paul's Epistle to the Colossians, to which I have already referred. Just as the innu-

[1] I quote an impartial witness in ratification of this statement:—"Intellect is not a power, but an instrument; not a thing which itself moves and works, but a thing which is moved and worked by forces from behind it. To say that men are ruled by reason is as irrational as to say that they are ruled by their eyes. Reason *is* an eye—the eye through which the desires see their way to gratification. And educating it only makes it a better eye; gives it a vision more accurate and more comprehensive; does not at all alter the desires subserved by it. However far-seeing you make it, the passions will still determine the directions in which it shall be turned, the objects on which it shall dwell. Just those ends which the instincts or sentiments propose will the intellect be employed to accomplish: culture of it having done nothing but increase the ability to accomplish them.—Herbert Spencer's *Social Statics*, p. 382.

merable worlds which are scattered through infinite space are not isolated and independent of each other, but, on the contrary, correlated, so that they are ceaselessly acting and reacting on each other, not only in the mass, but in all their particles; so neither are the realities of the spiritual world, its thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers, isolated facts; they are intimately related, and are being brought back to the primal unity through the Incarnation of the Eternal Word energizing through the Church, which is His Body. So transcendent a fact as the Incarnation of God could not be limited and exhausted by man's needs; it affected the universe and was independent of man's Fall, although that event had been foreseen and provided for. The angelic world was interested in the Incarnation, and so was inanimate nature, all-unconscious as it was of its discords and its share in the universal adoption. Let us look at the matter a little more closely. Our Lord took a human body the same as ours in all its constituent elements; a body, therefore, related to inorganic matter and to vegetable and animal life. He possessed, like other men, an animal soul which, apart from spirit, leaves man a brute. He took a human spirit, including all that we mean by intellectual and moral qualities. And all this was in Him

united to a Divine personality. In this way he made atonement for the whole of creation, which He made one with Himself, and through Himself with the Triune Godhead. "He took not on Him the nature of angels, but of the seed of Abraham He layeth hold." Had He taken angelic nature into union with Himself, the rest of creation would not have been affected thereby. But by taking human nature He embraced the whole universe of life in the fulness of His atonement. And we find creation in its typical representatives celebrating His birth; the manger receiving His infant form; the cold air of a winter's night warmed by the breath of cattle, kinder to Him, though they knew it not themselves, than the highly favoured race for whom He came to suffer and to die; and the choir of angels proclaiming His birth, not to the kings and nobles of the earth, but to the gentle shepherds of Bethlehem. We have some foregleams of this comprehensive character of the Atonement in the Old Testament; for example, in the twenty-third verse of the fifth chapter of Job. Referring to man's redemption, the afflicted Patriarch says, "For thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field, and the beasts of the field shall be in league with thee." Similarly in Hosea ii. 18: "And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the

field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground; and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely."

But does this view of the Atonement exhaust the meaning of the doctrine? Evidently not. It would have done so had there been no sin. But sin is a fact and involves guilt—the feeling of outraged justice and impending retribution. The sense of unworthiness to hold direct communication with God is one of the deepest feelings in our nature. We have examples of it in the histories of the saints of the Old and New Testaments, and all along the course of history. The traditions of heathendom testify to the same truth, and also the universal prevalence of the doctrine of sacrifice. What, then, do we mean by the doctrine of the Atonement in this more specific sense? It is easy enough to understand that we come into the world with a disorganized nature, a nature that has lost its principle of harmony, and in which the animal predominates over the spiritual. Hereditary evil, both moral and physical, is a fact too plain to be disputed. But hereditary guilt? Can guilt really be hereditary? Let us think. Have we anything of the same kind in secular life? A nobleman rebels against his sovereign. What is the consequence? He forfeits his

life. Is that all? No; he forfeits also his nobility, his possessions, and his privileges, and not for himself only, but for his posterity. Guilt therefore may in a sense be hereditary in civil life, but only in a negative sense. To put a child, still more a remote descendant, to death for an ancestral crime would be held a monstrous perversion of justice, revolting to the moral sense. Surely then we cannot ascribe to Almighty God conduct which we should regard as immoral on the part of man. Our conscience rebels against the notion that God would consign to endless torment any human being for a sin committed by a remote ancestor. In matter of fact God condemns no one to endless torment. He inflicts no arbitrary punishment on any one. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." "God will have all men to be saved and come unto the knowledge of the truth." But what do we mean by being saved? Not simply the remission of punishment. So far from it, the man who has a real sense of his own guilt has no wish to escape due punishment. He seeks, on the contrary, to make reparation for the wrong. God cannot make us happy by simply forgiving us and imputing to us a righteousness which belongs to another. Our conscience is burdened rather than relieved by learning that an innocent person has borne the punishment which

we deserved. Do you suppose you could make all the criminals in this kingdom happy by a general gaol delivery? Far from it, unless you had previously reformed their characters and rooted their evil habits out of their nature. You must not believe that God is keeping any one in a place of torment against that person's will. "The kingdom of heaven," said our Lord on one occasion, "is within you." The kingdom of hell is also within the sinner's own breast, in the anarchy and tormenting appetites of a ruined constitution. Men are not punished arbitrarily in the spiritual world for what they have done here, but for what they continue to do there as the inevitable consequence of the habits formed in this world. Pain does not assail the drunkard to-day as an arbitrary infliction apart from the excess of yesterday; it is the excess of yesterday continued in its results and impelling him to a repetition of the cause of his misery. Death makes no breach in the continuity of human character. Man carries with him into the spiritual realm precisely that character which he bore in this life. "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still." The punishment of the lost is no arbitrary infliction from

without, but a torment springing from within; from raging animal appetites or fiendish passions which devour the wretched creatures who have become their impotent slaves. So long as sin remains in man's nature he must of necessity be miserable, for he cherishes in his bosom the scorpion from which comes his pain. God strives to root out sin from our nature because He knows that pardon is otherwise useless. God loves us, and there is nothing so inexorable as love when it is genuine. There is no weakness in it. It will inflict present anguish to save from future misery. And thus God never passes over the sins of those He loves. He will not leave them alone, will not abandon them to themselves. He takes away the desire of their eyes, sends them cruel disappointments, forces them into the narrow thorny way, desolates their homes, and leaves their idols all shivered around them, that they may learn where their true happiness lies. As gold is put into the furnace to separate the dross from the pure ore, so God flings men into the furnace of affliction, that He may separate the sin which He hates from the soul which He loves. That is why He is called in the Old and New Testament "a consuming fire." Fire does not destroy, does not annihilate: it disintegrates, separates substances which are foreign to each other. God pursues us with the fire of His

love, seeking to melt and mould us into conformity with His will, because that is the only way in which He can make us happy But He is never vindictive, never unwilling to forgive, never requires a victim, like a Pagan deity, to appease offended majesty.

What then do we mean by the Atonement when we use it in the sense of propitiation? Now remember, to start with, that the barrier to reconciliation lies always in the will of man, never in the will of God. Atonement means making at one again persons who have been sundered. How are they to be brought together? Analyze your own feelings. When you have wronged, deeply hurt, one who has been kind to you, what is your first feeling? A longing to make reparation. Forgiveness would be painful to you without reparation on your part. Your conscience tells you of a law of compensation which forbids complete reconciliation, entire atonement, till the law of compensation has been satisfied. Even a child will yearn to offer some gift, purchased perhaps with the parent's own money, to expiate its faults. There is an innate sense of justice in the breast of man which is a reflex of the Divine justice. But what do we mean by the Divine justice? It is the offspring of Divine love at war with sin, which

is the contradiction of all that is truly lovable.[1] The law of compensation or retribution pervades the universe. In the beginning God made everything "very good," and He so ordered the work of His hands that it should inevitably avenge on the transgressor, sooner or later, every violation of the Divine order. Man's good or happiness is thus contingent on his conformity to the will of God, and every violation of that will must entail suffering, which is thus a finger-post set up by the Eternal Love to warn the unwary from dangerous paths. God wills the happiness of every form of created life, and it is probable that in the world of life below man happiness predominates so largely as to reduce conscious suffering almost to zero. To the animal mere existence is a joy. Its life is ever in the present. No regrets haunt it from the past, and coming events do not cast their shadows before. And when death overtakes it, either by natural process or violence, there is probably little or no suffering, as we

[1] "Giustizia mosse 'l mio alto fattore :
Fecemi la divina potestate,
La somma sapienza e 'l primo amore."
Inferno, Canto iii.

We may acknowledge the profound truth which underlies this explanation of the origin of the città dolente without necessarily adopting all Dante's views on Eschatology.

understand the word. It is when man appears upon the scene that suffering really begins, and justice is the form which the Divine love takes to drive man into the ways of happiness. It is therefore a paralogism to contrast Divine love and Divine justice as if they were opposite, or even different, attributes. Love always gives happiness to those who conform to its laws; in the form of justice it inflicts pain on the sinner, and must continue to do so while he sins.

But it may be objected that it is not the sinner who always suffers, but very often the innocent. In matter of fact the sinner always does suffer, though the suffering may be long delayed and he may fail to recognize it when it comes. But it is undoubtedly true that the innocent do suffer for the sins and errors of others. How is this to be reconciled with the Divine justice which I have called the offspring of Divine love? The answer is that mankind is an organic unity, a moral organism, so that injury done to a part is in fact done to the whole.[1] This view is enforced all through the Bible, and by none more

[1] See Dr. Kedney's *Christian Doctrine Harmonized and its Rationality Vindicated*, vol. i. p. 265. A striking and profound book, which has come under my notice as these sheets have been passing through the press, and which I have not been able as yet to read through,—indeed, to read at all with the care which it evidently deserves.

emphatically than by St. Paul, as in the following passages:—"For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and severally members one of another." And these several members have need of each other, so "that there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it." Human language bears witness to this doctrine—in such words, for example, as "fellow-feeling" and "sympathy;" and the history of the race furnishes abundant illustration of it. Even physically one member may affect injuriously a whole community —may propagate a germ of evil which vitiates the lives of all. Spiritual influences, being much more subtle, are consequently much more contagious. We are constantly throwing out moral influences on each other by word, look, gesture; and the law of vicarious suffering is thus seen to pervade the human race. But there is no injustice, inasmuch as the race is one, a real organism, moral, intellectual, and bodily; no injustice more than there is, according to St. Paul's analogy, in the members of the human body being severally affected by each other's pains.

The Eternal Son of God, then, having become Incarnate, having taken human nature in its integrity, with the hereditary proclivities of the Fall cut off by His miraculous Conception, and having, in St. Paul's language, thus "recapitulated" humanity in this reconstruction of it, it follows that He also bore and suffered for its sins. "He was made sin for us Who knew no sin," and thereby made an atonement for the whole race.

Now we all awake, when we begin to reason about these things, to the consciousness of our unworthiness to appear before God. We have a feeling of guilt on our conscience, which bears witness to our organic membership of an attainted race. But, in truth, there is no need to puzzle ourselves about inherited guilt. We have sins enough of our own to humble us and to make us exclaim with Peter: "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." The natural impulse of fallen man is to hide himself, like Adam, from the presence of his Maker. Human nature therefore needs an atonement, and has always cried aloud for it; needs some way of access back to God, some means whereby the alienation that has subsisted between man's nature and God's shall be removed. And this was done by the Incarnation of the Divine nature in Jesus of Nazareth. By that transcendent

condescension the Son of Man "opened the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers"—to all, that is, who choose to avail themselves of the restored heritage of humanity. God the Son took human nature in its integrity, and thus learnt experimentally what sin entailed. Through His humiliation, suffering, and death He fulfilled the law of retribution which ordains that morally every wrong must be righted; that sin is sure to find the sinner out sooner or later; that humanity, collectively and regarded as a moral entity, must pay the debt of its transgression; that an offence against Eternal Love must be undone. So, you see, the atonement made by Christ is in a manner the payment of a ransom or debt; but a ransom, not to appease a vengeful Divine Father, but to liberate mankind from the thraldom of a disorganized nature. For in sad truth man unredeemed is in real bondage: bondage to Nature, which has become his master and tyrant instead of being his servant; bondage to ancestral tendencies towards physical and moral degeneration; bondage to an obliquity of vision and infirmity of purpose which make him an easy prey to temptation. To break the spell of these malign influences; to place at the centre of human nature a new principle of life from which men may make a fresh start;—this surely is in

a very real sense to pay a ransom for fallen man; to break his bonds; to open the door of his prison and enable him to regain his liberty. And this is what Christ did by His atoning sacrifice—a sacrifice begun when He "emptied Himself" of His divine glory, and consummated when He died on the Cross. Had our Lord been a mere man He could not have made an atonement. His acts could have affected none but Himself; they could have had no influence on the destiny of the race. But the humanity of Christ is not that of any particular man; it is universal humanity, humanity in the abstract, humanity viewed germinally. His manhood therefore reaches to every member of the race. He is the pure Vine of which all human beings may become branches; the Well of Living Water out of which all may drink and imbibe eternal life. Man may now approach His Maker without shame or fear, for he may approach Him in the nature of the Second Adam, in the very manhood which God Himself now wears. Humanity is thus made, as St. Peter does not hesitate to express it, "partaker of the Divine Nature."[1] An atonement has been made which is adequate to all the require-

[1] *φύσις*, not *οὐσία*; *i.e.* the attributes of God, which are in part communicable, not His incommunicable essence. It was of the *φύσις*, not the *οὐσία*, that the Word emptied Himself, "economically," when He became man.

ments of the case. Look again at the first chapter of the Epistle to the Colossians in the light of the explanations which I have given, and you will see what a depth of meaning and moral grandeur is concentrated in the Apostle's terse statement of the doctrine of the Atonement as an all-embracing dispensation existing eternally in the Divine intention, and not as an isolated fact in time to meet an unforeseen emergency. It is in the light of that great truth that St. Paul's references to predestination must be understood. And it is in that sense that one of our own Articles of Religion explains the matter when it tells us that "We must receive God's promises (of salvation) in such wise as they be generally set forth to us in Holy Scripture." "Generally set forth;" that does not mean set forth for the most part or in a general way, but set forth generically—that is, as applicable to the entire race. The word in the Latin version of the seventeenth Article indicates this interpretation. This universality of the Atonement as covering the whole of creation had strong hold of St. Paul's mind. He states it as follows in Eph. i. 9–12:—"Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself: that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one

[the essential idea of atonement] all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him: in Whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him Who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will: that we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ." The word translated, "gather together in one," means "recapitulated," summed up and reduced to harmonious unity under one Head through the Incarnation. That is the leading idea of the Atonement in St. Paul's teaching; and the predestination he speaks of is simply that of pre-eminence in a world-wide process.

And it is this view of it which has made the doctrine of the Atonement so attractive and subduing, revolutionizing man's ideas not only towards God, or even towards man, but towards all creation, investing it with a mystery and sanctity it never had inspired before. God, as depicted in the Old Testament, says Arthur Hallam—and we may add still more so as He is exhibited in the Incarnation—"was a manifold everlasting manifestation of one deep feeling—a desire for human affection. Love is not asked in vain from generous dispositions;" and Infinite Love condescending to sue for the love of man becomes

irresistible to all minds who believe in the Incarnation, and have not polluted their affections. A striking illustration of this is given in a letter from a Christian native in one of the South Sea Islands, who had been a cannibal. He went up to the altar one day to receive the Holy Communion, and I will relate in his own words what followed:—"When I approached the table I did not know beside whom I should have to kneel. Then suddenly I saw beside me a man who some years ago slew my father, and drank his blood, whom I then swore I would kill the first time I should see him. Now think what I felt when I suddenly knelt beside him. It came upon me with terrible power, and I could not prevent it, and so I went back to my seat. Arriving there I saw in the spirit the upper sanctuary, and seemed to hear a voice saying, 'Hereby shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another.' That made a deep impression on me, and it seemed to me in thought that I saw another sight, a cross, and a man nailed thereon, and I heard him say: 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' Then I went back to the altar."

Another illustration still more remarkable is supplied by the famous passage reported from Napoleon's conversations at St. Helena—a passage that cannot be

quoted too often. "I have been accustomed to put before me the examples of Alexander and Cæsar, with the hope of rivalling their exploits, and living in the minds of men for ever. Yet, after all, in what sense does Alexander, in what sense does Cæsar, live? Who knows or cares anything about them? . . . But, on the contrary, there is just one Name in the world that lives. It is the Name of One Who passed His years in obscurity, and Who died a malefactor's death. Eighteen hundred years have gone since that time, but still it has its hold upon the human mind. It has possessed the world, and it maintains possession. Amid the most varied nations, under the most diversified circumstances, in the most cultivated, in the rudest races and intellects, in all classes of society, the Owner of that great Name reigns. High and low, rich and poor, acknowledge Him. Millions of souls are conversing with Him, are venturing on His Word, are looking for His presence. Palaces, sumptuous, innumerable, are raised to His honour; His image, as in the hour of His deepest humiliation, is triumphantly displayed in the proud city, in the open country, in the corners of streets, on the tops of mountains. . . . It is worn next the heart in life; it is held before the failing eyes in death. Here, then, is One Who is not a mere name, Who is not a mere fiction. He is dead

and gone, but still He lives—lives as the living energetic thought of successive generations, as the awful motive power of a thousand great events. He has done without effort what others with lifelong struggles have not done. Can He be less than Divine? Who is He but the Creator Himself, Who is Sovereign over His own works, towards Whom our eyes turn instinctively, because He is our Father and our God?"

The Atonement, as taught by St. Paul, has transfigured man's thoughts about his relations with all forms of existence. See how it has entirely altered the position of woman; and the position occupied by woman, let me say, is always a test of civilization. Where she is degraded man is impure. Before the Son of God was "born of a woman," uniting in Himself the perfection of both sexes, woman had become for the most part the slave of man's passions, or the toy of his caprice. Christianity has restored her to her original position as man's co-equal partner, to purify and refine the coarser texture of his nature. The Atonement has also shed a glory and a sanctity on humanity as such. It is difficult now to realize the cheapness in which human nature was held even among the most cultivated nations of antiquity. Slavery prevailed everywhere. The slaves formed about one-half of the population of the Roman Empire,

and were in the proportion of three to two in the city of Rome. And the slave was treated worse than brute animals, with far more cruelty, and with indignities of which brutes are not susceptible. Christianity, without making premature war upon slavery, laid down principles which have been fatal to slavery wherever they have had fair play. Again, before the Incarnation natural affection had become to a large extent quenched. According to Roman law a father might put to death even an adult child without assigning a reason. That, too, became at once impossible under Christianity. Infanticide was allowed by law in Greece and Rome. The vision of the Divine Child in His manger crib made infanticide a capital crime by the law of Christendom. Even so elevated a philosopher as Plato recommended, in his ideal Republic, that weakly and misshapen children should be put to death by exposure to cold or the fangs of wild beasts. But when Jesus laid His own pure nature against the polluted humanity, which in its sinless essence He had assumed, that He might purify it and staunch its wounds; when He took up squalid children in His arms and blessed them; when He touched the leper, and cured the paralytic, and restored the deformed, and committed the ulcerous beggar at the Rich Man's gate to the guardianship of angels, and dismissed the harlot and adulterer in hope, bidding

them to "sin no more,"—He taught us to recognize and reverence the Divine image in its most repulsive human embodiments, and indeed to love it all the more on that account. He has glorified suffering in all its forms by precept and example:—

> "The best of men
> That e'er wore earth about Him was a Sufferer—
> A soft, meek, patient, humble, tranquil Spirit—
> The first true Gentleman that ever breathed."

No suffering, indeed, ever was or can be like His; for in Him human nature was summed up and concentrated. "In Thee is the well of life." As the Second Adam, the New Man, He was at the centre of humanity, and was thus in touch with every pulsation of its sorrows, and—still worse—of its ingratitude, at all points of the circumference. The purer, the deeper, the stronger a man's love is, the more keenly does it feel the lack of any appreciative response. Disappointment passes lightly over shallow natures which have little power of sympathy and do not feel deeply the need of fellowship. What pathos, what dread of coming isolation, breathes through the gentle complaint: "Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone." Of all the pains that He endured perhaps none wounded Him more deeply

than the pang of baffled love; "wounded," too, "in the house of His friends." In a sense broader and deeper than the Roman poet dreamt of, "nothing human is alien from" Him Who "for us men and for our salvation came down from Heaven."

The animal kingdom also has been brought under the dominion of the love of the Atonement. A society for the prevention of cruelty to animals would have been regarded as a premonitory symptom of insanity among even the most cultivated people of the ancient world. But Christianity has made cruelty to animals a crime—an offence against Him Whose care is over the sparrows, and Who "feedeth the young ravens that call upon Him."

The Atonement too, understood in its grand broad sense, has created a sort of mysterious sympathy between Man and Nature. In the light of that doctrine the material world has ceased to be regarded as a "fortuitous concourse of atoms." It is seen to be one great whole, bound in all its parts by mysterious correlations and sympathies, which culminate in man, and through him, by means of the Incarnation, in God. It is a trite observation that there is very little evidence in ancient poetry that even the highest minds of heathendom had any appreciation of natural scenery, at least in those spiritual aspects of it with which

Christian poetry and art have made us so familiar. Wordsworth and Ruskin would have been simply unintelligible in Rome and Athens before Christianity forced man to recognize the worlds of moral and spiritual analogies which lie behind the sights and sounds of Nature. Man now sees everywhere, if he looks for it, more than meets the careless eye. In wandering clouds, as Ruskin has taught us, and in the forms of mountains; in the mystery of the forest and the ocean; in the joyousness of the dawn and the melancholy yearnings inspired by the setting of the sun behind hill or sea, the Christian is reminded of the "light that never was on sea or land," and he finds everywhere the evidence of an all-pervading Presence—

> "Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean, and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
> A motion and a spirit which impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things."

And now, lastly, consider the dignity imparted to human nature by its assumption into Godhead. "Ye are not your own," said St. Paul to the Christians of his day, and his warning is as true for us. The nature which we wear is now worn by God. God the Son is very Man, with a human intellect, a human imagina-

tion, and also human affections which throb in sympathy with all His suffering members. It is a consoling thought, but also a very awful one. For remember you can never now defile or disgrace your own nature without disgracing His Who died that you might live. You know how even in this world the rest of the family feel keenly, as in a manner of their own, the disgrace of any member of the family. We Christians have a Brother in heaven, Who is King of kings and Lord of lords. Have you ever thought, when tempted to sin, that you were about to "crucify afresh the Son of God"—to make the blush of shame mantle on His cheek—shame for the stain inflicted on the nature which is His as well as yours, and which He redeemed for you? Remember, further, that there are two principles and two tendencies in the nature of each of you contending for the mastery. On the one hand you have a nature which has a close affinity with the lower world, a nature which is of the earth, and has an animal soul with animal appetites that are always dragging down the higher nature which is allied to the spiritual sphere. In proportion as a man yields to his animal appetites the lower nature gains upon the higher, and may at length completely crush it, leaving the animal alone in possession. St. Paul calls attention in many places to this internal conflict in each

of us, and in his great chapter on the Resurrection (1 Cor. xv.) he points out the two tendencies and principles in human nature to which I have just referred. The human body, he says, "is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the Last Adam was made a quickening spirit." The word translated "natural" here is literally "psychical," that is, under the dominion of the animal soul. In other words, man became through Adam's fall subject to the dominion of the animal part of his nature. But the Second Adam triumphed over the animal nature and asserted and established the supremacy of spirit. We have now to make our choice, and it is a very serious one, for it may be irrevocable. Once you deliberately place yourself on the down-grade of sin you have no security that you can ever retrace your steps.

sequel of His Death on the Cross. "If Christ be not raised," St. Paul says truly, "then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain."

But there was also a moral necessity for the Resurrection of Jesus which appeals to instincts wide as human nature. The universal heart of man revolts against death, and refuses to acquiesce in it as the goal of life. And this is true especially in the case of those we love. It is much easier to face death for ourselves than for them. We cannot resign ourselves without the agony of despair to the belief that we shall see them again no more for ever. Cicero met his own death with heroic fortitude; but the philosophy of consolation which appeared so convincing in the villa at Tusculum, environed by all that nature and art could do to make life happy, vanished like a mirage of the desert when death carried off his Tullia. And so it will ever be. The man that has truly loved will never, unless it be in the aberration of despair, accept death as the final solution of the riddle of existence. The heart searches for its vanished kindred, and will not believe that they have ceased to be, or that its interest in them, or theirs in it, is broken. It is a universal sentiment of humanity that has survived and will survive all the sophistries of speculation. We see

it in an Old Mortality wandering up and down the country to restore the time-worn tombstones of the Covenanters, and in the great orator of Athens, who knew the spell that it contained when he electrified his degenerate countrymen into a fitful display of patriotism by his passionate apostrophe to "those who died at Marathon." It is also seen in those legends of many lands which represent some hero or national benefactor as only reposing for a time in the many mansions of the dead: our own Arthur still waiting in the Vale of Avalon, or the mighty Barbarossa sleeping in his mystic cave till his country shall again need his trusty sword.

And allied with this feeling of invincible reluctance to surrender our beloved to annihilation is the instinct which whispers to us that the good cannot die. We have no such instinct about evil, even when evil is personified in human lives. Death seems no more than the fitting and lasting portion of men who live sensual, selfish, brutish lives, and who go down into the pit with characters matured and rendered incorrigible by long habit. But we instinctively rebel against the doctrine which would teach us that the true, the noble, the unselfish shall be vanquished for good and all by death. Our moral sense strenuously asserts that lives which in their day have been full of

loving service, or brave in the defence and promotion of righteousness, shall themselves descend, never to return, into "the land where all things are forgotten." Consider Jesus of Nazareth for a moment only as man; a homeless wanderer in Judæa, going about doing good without thought of reward; healing the sick, cleansing the lepers, curing the insane, comforting the mourners, raising the dead, weeping over the grave of His friend before restoring him to his sisters; or, on the other hand, confronting and denouncing hypocrisy, lying, impurity, cowardice, oppression, and cruelty. That such a Life should be holden permanently by death we feel to be such a moral contradiction that our natural impulse is to reject it as impossible. And physical science comes forward to ratify this dictate of our moral sense when it tells us that the fittest must survive. Is there any kind of life in the whole universe of being fitter to survive than His? Well might the Apostle say that "it was not possible" that such a Life "should be holden of" death, even apart from the Divinity which encompassed it.

But we are told that a resurrection from the dead, and consequently Christ's Resurrection, is unworthy of credit: first, because it is opposed to the order of Nature; secondly, because it is not attested by sufficient

evidence. Let us glance, during the short time at our disposal, at these two objections.

1. The first is an attack on the belief in miracles in general, and I have dealt with it on a former occasion. Something, however, may profitably be added here, and I will begin by disengaging the defence of miracles from an argument which seems to me at once untenable and mischievous; I mean the distinction sought to be established between the miracles of Scripture and what are called ecclesiastical miracles. Dr. Mozley, not to mention other great names, has insisted on that distinction in one of his brilliant Bampton Lectures. Now I have no objection to the rejection of any or all of the ecclesiastical miracles after sufficient examination of them on their merits. What I object to, as utterly inadmissible in logic and ruinous as a matter of controversial tactics, is the setting up of an arbitrary line, on one side of which miracles are freely accepted, on the other rigidly excluded. Dr. Mozley lays down a number of tests by which, as he thinks, the miracles of Scripture may be distinguished from all others. But these tests break down the moment they are confronted with facts. For instance, "wildness," "puerile extravagance," "grotesqueness and absurdity," mark, Dr. Mozley says, the class of non-Scriptural miracles.

This is true of many, perhaps of most, of the ecclesiastical miracles; but it is by no means true of all. On the other hand, Dr. Mozley's tests have been used by sceptical writers against the miracles of the Bible; such as the speaking of the serpent to Eve, and of the ass to Balaam; the transformation of Moses's rod into a serpent which devoured the serpent-rods of the Egyptians and then became a rod again; the destruction of the children who mocked Elisha; and the resurrection of a corpse which had afterwards accidentally touched that prophet's lifeless bones. It is clear, therefore, that what looks like extravagance or absurdity cannot be admitted as a valid test, since it proves too much. Dr. Mozley, indeed, endeavours to get rid of this objection by contrasting "the quantity and proportion" of "miracles of an eccentric type" recorded in ecclesiastical history with those of the same class related in the Bible. But this is to forget that the Bible miracles are in reality a selection out of a large mass of alleged miracles. Not to dwell on the miracles of the Apocryphal Gospels, which are wild and extravagant enough, the author of the fourth Gospel states explicitly that the miracles recorded by himself are but a fractional part of those which Jesus had wrought. On the other hand, a selection might

easily be made of post-Apostolic miracles which would stand all Dr. Mozley's tests. It would be difficult, for example, to summon a witness more competent in every way to give satisfactory evidence as to any matter which fell within the range of his own observation or investigation than St. Augustine of Hippo. Now St. Augustine bears witness to the reality of several miracles which were alleged to have occurred in his neighbourhood during his lifetime; and he declares, in particular, that he beheld one of those miracles with his own eyes. Ambrose, Irenæus, and other great names, bear similar testimony; and if we summarily reject their evidence, not on its merits, but merely because the alleged miracle comes into collision with some arbitrary assumption of our own, we shall find it rather difficult to make any effective answer to the sceptic who proposes to apply our canon of criticism to the miracles of the Bible. I am not now expressing any opinion on the credibility of ecclesiastical miracles; I am only pointing out the danger of rejecting them in the lump without investigation, in obedience to an arbitrary test which proves a great deal too much for believers in the inspiration of the Bible. It is proverbially dangerous to play with edged tools, and it is better to admit frankly the impossibility of laying down any

criteria which shall include all the Biblical miracles and exclude all the ecclesiastical.

I have said on a previous occasion that miracles are not in any way a violation or suspension of the laws or order of Nature; and I will now add that, on the contrary, a miracle postulates the order of Nature as its correlate. The turning of water into wine is but the acceleration of a natural process wrought by a Will that has power over Nature. The juice of the grape is water transmuted mysteriously into the raw material of wine. There is an absence of apparent means in the ordinary process as well as in the miracle of Cana; the difference is only one of degree. Both transcend the skill of man, and both rest on Nature as a basis. To turn stones into bread would have been a violation of natural order. To turn water into wine was in harmony with natural order. St. Mark,[1] for instance, tells us that our Lord "could do no mighty work" in "His own country," because the people were not in a receptive mood. Does not that show that His miracles were wrought on the basis of the existing order of Nature? He neither overpowered nor suspended the ordinary laws of human nature, and the free will of man could thus effectually bar the miraculous energy of God Incarnate. When

[1] vi. 5.

human nature, on the other hand, was not only passive, but energetically susceptible of spiritual influences, as in the case of the woman with an issue of blood, it attracted healing virtue from the Body of our Lord.

Dr. Carpenter, the late eminent physiologist, in the course of an elaborate argument against the evidential credibility of miracles, gives the following illustration, which seems to me to tell strongly against his thesis:—

"Every medical man of large experience is well aware how strongly the patient's undoubting faith in the efficacy of a particular remedy or mode of treatment assists its action; and when the doctor is himself animated by such a faith, he has the more power of exciting it in others. A simple prediction, without any remedial measure, will sometimes work its own fulfilment. Thus Sir James Paget tells of a case in which he strongly impressed a woman having a sluggish, non-malignant tumour in the breast, that this tumour would disperse within a month or six weeks; and so it did. He perceived this patient's nature to be one on which the assurance would act favourably; and no one could more earnestly and effectively enforce it. On the other hand, a fixed belief on the part of the patient that a mortal disease has seized upon the frame, or that a particular operation or system of treatment will prove unsuccessful,

seems in numerous instances to have been the real occasion of the fatal result." [1]

Is not this somewhat akin to what we usually mean by a miracle? We have here a strong will, instinct with faith, acting on a weaker will, and through that weaker will on the tissues of the body, and either arresting and reversing the process of decomposition or accelerating the process of recovery. Is this different in kind or only in degree from the miracle performed by St. Peter when he said to the lame man at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple, "Look on us," and then commanded him to "rise up and walk." "And immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength." If mere human will can thus act directly, as Dr. Carpenter admits, on the laws of health and disease, reversing or modifying their normal action; nay, can even determine the issues of life and death; may not a resurrection from the dead be only a further exemplification of the same power at a more distant stage of the process of dissolution? It is observable that in every case of resurrection our Lord addressed imperatively the spirit that had left the body. The daughter of Jairus He "called, saying, Maid, arise." To the son of the widow of Nain He said, "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise." In raising

[1] *Nature and Man*, by William B. Carpenter, M.D., p. 257.

Lazarus, four days after death, "He cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth." And He tells us of an hour when "all that are in the grave shall hear His voice, and shall come forth."[1] Is it inconceivable that this final summons to the victims of dissolution is but an example on a grand scale of the power which Sir James Paget exercised on a small scale in the story related by Dr. Carpenter? It is in both cases the action of spirit upon matter. The adult human body is but a minute cell gradually magnified. At death it is dissolved into its elements, and not a particle of the body that is buried will rise again. But the vital germ remains, and will clothe itself with a spiritual body proper to it: "to every seed its own body." Why may not the gradual development from an embryonic germ to adult maturity, which is the law of the human body under its present conditions, be one day effected by a sudden transformation, like the change of water into wine at the marriage feast of Cana? In point of mystery, the gradual development of an organism is as inexplicable as its sudden transformation. The mystery lies in the hidden cause, not in its mode of action (see 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52). It is obvious, of course, that the Will which could restore life to others could resume His own when He chose.

[1] St. John v. 28, 29.

And, after all, the restoration of life in any particular organism is less incomprehensible than the beginning of life, and is certainly less of an invasion of the order of Nature. The Power which has achieved the greater cannot be baffled by the less.

But belief in miracles is supposed by some to be incompatible with the acceptance of the doctrine of evolution. Yet the simple truth is that the doctrine of evolution has sapped the ordinary scientific position of the denier of miracles. For the doctrine of evolution implies that the Creator of the universe is energetically present through all the operations of Nature. If this world were a machine set going for a certain period of time, the result would be constant and invariable effects following from constant mechanical causes. But evolution has to do with living forms, and these are, *ex hypothesi*, infinitely variable. Granting that protoplasm is chemically the same in the germ-cell of a man and of a fish, this only makes it all the more certain that a presiding Mind directs and shapes the very different results. But if we admit that a Supreme Mind is behind the framework of Nature, directing and controlling her forces, we shall recognize that a miracle is only an instance of the same control charged with a more manifest purpose. The will of God acting on

brute matter and compelling its obedience is not different in kind from the will of man energizing through the material organism of the body; and the one is no more than the other a violation or suspension of physical law. If the process by which the loaves were multiplied or by which Lazarus was restored to life were laid bare, a man of science might be able to correlate it with the partially revealed processes which are daily going on in the laboratory of Nature. In short, scientific objection to miracles, if we are to use language with strict accuracy, there can be none, and men of science themselves, who are not wedded to a foregone conclusion, are foremost in making the admission. Dr. Carpenter, for example, in his assault on miracles, on the ground of "fallacies of testimony," makes the following candid admission:—

"But the scientific theist who regards the so-called 'laws of Nature' as nothing else than man's expressions of so much of the Divine order as it lies within his power to discern, and who looks at the uninterruptedness of this order as the highest evidence of its original perfection, would find (as it seems to me) no abstract difficulty in the conception that the Author of Nature can, if He will, occasionally depart from it. And hence, as I deem it presumptuous to deny

that there might be occasions which in His wisdom may require such departure, I am not conscious of any such scientific 'prepossession' against miracles as would prevent me from accepting them as facts, if trustworthy evidence of their reality could be adduced. The question with me, therefore, is simply: 'Have we any adequate historical ground for the belief that such departure has ever taken place?'" [1]

We may accept this as a perfectly fair way of stating the problem. Let us then consider briefly the leading objections to the credibility of our Lord's Resurrection on the ground of deficiency of evidence. Dr. Carpenter's incredulity rests almost entirely on the argument of prepossession, which he illustrates mainly from epidemics of credulity, such as the various alleged phenomena of "spiritualism." This argument is also the fulcrum of the scepticism of the Squire in "Robert Elsmere." Robert Elsmere's faith gives way under the pressure of the Squire's assurance that prepossession in favour of miracles in the time of Christ "governed the work of all men of all schools." Well may Mr. Gladstone characterize this as "a most gross and palpable exaggeration. In philosophy the Epicurean school was atheistic, the Stoic school was ambiguously theistic, and doubt nestled in the

[1] *Nature and Man*, p. 241.

Academy. Christianity had little direct contact with these schools, but they acted on the tone of thought in a manner not favourable but adverse to the preconception. . . . The age was not an age of faith among thinking and ruling classes, either in natural or in supernatural religion."[1] When "certain of the philosophers of the Epicureans and of the Stoics encountered" St. Paul in Athens, they derided him as a "babbler," and "a setter forth of strange gods, because he preached unto them Jesus and the Resurrection."[2] And they listened attentively to his discourse before the Areopagus till they "heard of the resurrection of the dead;" and then "some mocked," while the more courteous veiled their scepticism in the polite or perhaps scornful promise to "hear him again concerning this." It is evident, moreover, from St. Paul's chapter on the resurrection in his first Epistle to the Corinthians that he found that doctrine to be the great stumbling-block to the acceptance of Christianity. The eulogistic biographer of Apollonius of Tyana is so well aware of this prejudice against the doctrine, that, although he credits Apollonius with superhuman endowments, he is careful to insinuate

[1] "*Robert Elsmere* and the Battle of Belief," *Nineteenth Century* for May, 1888, p. 775.

[2] Acts xvii. 18, 32.

that the only case of resurrection attributed to him was probably no resurrection at all, but only a trance, "a seeming death."[1] He evidently suspected that the ascription of such a miracle to his hero would prejudice the public mind against the rest of his narrative. So far was the disposition of the early ages of Christianity from belief in a resurrection from the dead. And it is obvious that if that miracle is established, the testimony is more than sufficient to carry all the other miracles of the Gospel.

But was the Jewish mind prepared for such a resurrection as that of our Lord? Clearly not. A powerful party rejected the doctrine altogether, and those who accepted it limited their belief to a general resurrection at the Last Day. We see this in the answer of Martha to our Lord when He said, "Thy brother shall rise again." "I know that he shall rise again," she answered, "in the resurrection at the Last Day." And so far were our Lord's immediate followers from being in a frame of mind favourable to belief in His Resurrection, that the very opposite is the fact. He tried, but failed, to prepare their minds for it. Even after the Resurrection they were slow to believe

[1] Cardinal Newman's *Historical Sketches*, pp. 325, 326. Douglas (*Criterion*, p. 387) observes that some heretics affirmed that our Lord rose from the dead, φαντασίωδως, only in appearance, *from an idea of the impossibility of a resurrection.*

it. The two disciples on their way to Emmaus told their unrecognized Master that the women who had visited the empty tomb had made the "company" of the disciples "astonished" by announcing His Resurrection on the authority of angels. And Himself upbraided them for their unbelief: "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?"

And if they were not prepared for His Resurrection at all, still less were they prepared for the kind of resurrection which they immediately began to preach. It was unique. There was no precedent for it, nothing to suggest it, in their sacred writings or national traditions. The few examples of previous resurrections in the Old Testament and in their own experience were simply returns to the previous life in all particulars, and they were, after all, only reprieves: the restored victims of death had to succumb again to the inevitable doom of mortal man. But Christ rose to die no more. "Death hath no more dominion over Him" is the triumphant keynote of the Apostolic message to mankind. Nor was this all. His Body had undergone a mysterious change. It was no longer subject to the laws of matter. It appeared and disappeared suddenly, regardless of material barriers, and assumed different

forms,[1] not always recognizable.[2] Whether the sceptic, then, regards our Lord's disciples as deliberate deceivers or as self-deceived, in either case it is against all reason and analogy that they should have invented an entirely novel and unheard-of resurrection for their Master. Their prime object was to make converts, and they would surely not have gone out of their way to make the cardinal article of the new religion harder of belief than it need have been.

[1] St. Mark xvi. 12.

[2] St. Luke xxiv. 16; St. John xxi. 4, 12. We have here a touch of nature which betokens personal knowledge on the part of the narrator. "And none of the disciples durst ask Him, Who art Thou? knowing that it was the Lord." He was evidently different in outward form from the Jesus of other days; yet they had an intuitive perception that it was He, though they still longed, with the pathetic nervousness of profound love, to have their lingering doubt dissipated, but were afraid to ask Him. That little detail was never the invention either of fraud or of enthusiastic prepossession. See also St. Luke xxiv. 36–41. On one of His sudden apparitions to His disciples "they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And He said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself: handle Me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have. And when He had thus spoken, He showed them His hands and His feet." The evidence satisfied their reason. Nevertheless "they yet believed not *for joy*, and wondered." How natural this is! The heart, from the very depth and intensity of its love, is prone to lag behind the intellect in believing what it passionately longs to believe. It is incredulous from the ecstasy of its joy. This is an incident which it would not have occurred to a forger or a fanatic to invent. The impugners of the Resurrection pass by a multitude of these links of circumstantial evidence.

It is hardly necessary to discuss, even if there were time, other objections that have been advanced against our Lord's Resurrection, for the cumulative evidence for it is overwhelming. The Christian Church is a living demonstration of it. Its existence is inconceivable apart from the Resurrection. Why the change from the last day of the week to the first, which is coeval with Christianity? Why Easter Day, which is also as old as Christianity? Why the celebration of the Lord's Supper always on the first day of the week? Why the name "Lord's Day," which dates from the New Testament? It is undeniable that the first teachers of Christianity put the Resurrection of Jesus in the forefront of their preaching, and it is equally undeniable that the challenge was not taken up. Their Jewish adversaries did not seriously question the fact. Why did they make no serious attempt to substantiate the story put into the mouths of the Roman guard? Even if we were to give up the Gospel narrative altogether as the product of a later age,[1] we

[1] The accomplished author of *Supernatural Religion* says boldly that he "has not found a single trace of any of those [Synoptic] Gospels during the first century and a half after the death of Christ." This is a strong statement. Let us try it by one crucial test. St. Polycarp was a disciple of St. John, and Irenæus, who knew him personally, has left us a most graphic description of him, mentioning, among other interesting details, Polycarp's "familiar intercourse with John, as he was accustomed to tell, as also his familiarity with

have St. Paul's Epistles to the Corinthians, Galatians, and Romans; and I believe that no reputable authority anywhere can be cited in favour of bringing any of these down to a date later than A.D. 60. Now in all these Epistles the literal facts of the Resurrection and Ascension are either taken for granted or emphatically affirmed. And in one of them the Apostle asserts that Christ was seen after His Resurrection, not only by all the Apostles, but by "above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain unto this present." The first Epistle of St. Peter is also admitted, even by hostile

those who had seen the Lord." Now St. Polycarp has left an Epistle, written in the early part of the second century, in which there are quotations from the Gospels so nearly literal that the ingenuity of the author of *Supernatural Religion* has failed to discredit them. Indeed, there is one chapter in the epistle which is simply a mosaic of quotations from several of the Pauline Epistles, from St. Peter, from the Acts of the Apostles, from the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Luke, and from the Book of Psalms; but there is hardly any of the quotations verbally accurate throughout. He evidently quoted from memory, as writers of that day were wont to do, and it is uncritical to contend that the passages are not quotations at all because there are slight variations between them and the originals. Such style of criticism would make sad havoc of contemporary history even among ourselves, for accurate quotation is still a rare virtue. We have, moreover, the testimony of Irenæus, the authenticity of whose work the author of *Supernatural Religion* does not dispute, that he heard Polycarp conversing "concerning His [Christ's] miracles and His doctrine" "in consistency with the Holy Scriptures, as he (Polycarp) had received them from the eye-witnesses of the doctrine of Salvation."

critics, to be genuine, and it bears unquestionable testimony to the fact of Christ's Resurrection. We must therefore accept the evidence of St. Paul and St. Peter at least so far as this: that belief in Christ's Resurrection and Ascension was universal in the Christian Church while the majority of His followers and Jewish contemporaries were alive and able to expose fraud or delusion, if it were possible. How, too, shall we account for the extraordinary change which passed over the characters of Christ's disciples after His Resurrection? They are different men from the timid peasants whom we knew before. A new spirit is breathed into them, and they become new men. Nor does the testimony of early Christian writers stand alone. Pliny, describing in an official letter to Trajan the habits of the Christians of Bithynia, after personal investigation, mentions, among other things, their early sacramental worship on the first day of the week, when they were accustomed to "sing a hymn to Christ *as God.*"

To sum up, then, in very few words. Our Lord's Resurrection stands the test of the utmost scrutiny alike on the part of science and of historic evidence. Antecedent objection is out of the question. The Power which has created life is, *à fortiori*, able to restore it in any of its individual forms. By a miracle I

understand an effect produced by invisible agency in a manner not explicable by any known force or law of Nature. Before, therefore, we are entitled to deny the credibility of miracles, on the ground of their being a violation of natural order, we must be in a position to affirm two propositions which are certainly incapable of proof, namely, that there are no latent forces in nature, unknown to us, able under intelligent control to produce a miracle; secondly, that there is no personal intelligence outside of Nature able to control her hidden forces.

The evidential argument against miracles has really not advanced beyond Hume's famous dogma, that it is more probable that testimony should be false than that such a violation of experience as a miracle implies should be true. The objection is specious, but untenable. It has been overthrown repeatedly by the progress of physical science. Let us take one or two examples. Alternate generation, fertilization *per saltum* for several generations, hermaphroditism —all these are scientific facts, yet are opposed to the inductions of experience down to our own time. Suppose Hume had been told that there were creatures which at pleasure threw off a limb, that this limb forthwith began an independent existence, and by-and-by impregnated a female of the same species, he

would have refuted the story at once by his destructive formula against miracles. It was contrary to experience down to his time. It is now proved by such evidence as would have satisfied Hume himself. But the point is that it was as true when Hume wrote as it is now. Yet his argument would then have disproved it absolutely, and would even have forbidden inquiry. In like manner we may hereafter be able to perceive that a resurrection from the dead is an operation as susceptible of explanation as some of those secrets of Nature which would have appeared miraculous to our forefathers. We must always remember that our knowledge of the forces of Nature is extremely limited—a fact which the progress of physical science makes more manifest every year. "There is always a probability," as the late Professor Jevons observes, "of causes being in existence without our knowledge; and these may at any moment produce an unexpected effect." And he gives the following illustration:—

"We can imagine reasoning creatures dwelling in a world where the atmosphere was a mixture of oxygen and inflammable gas, like the firedamp of coal mines. If devoid of fire, they might have lived on for long ages in complete unconsciousness of the tremendous forces which a single spark could call into play. In

the twinkling of an eye new laws might have come into action, and the poor reasoning creatures, who were so confident of their knowledge of the uniform conditions of their world, might have had no time to speculate upon the overthrow of all their theories. Can we, with our finite knowledge, be sure that such an overthrow of our theories is impossible?"[1]

The truth is that controversialists are far too prone to the logical fallacy against which Aristotle warns us — that, namely, of demanding evidence other than is suitable to the subject-matter in dispute.[2] To any one who considers the matter dispassionately, the Resurrection of Christ, I venture to think, will appear to rest on evidence as irrefragable as the assassination of Julius Cæsar. In neither case is mathematical proof possible, nor would it in either case be reasonable to demand it. Christianity is not a speculative philosophy, but a religion for the guidance of human conduct and the regeneration of human nature; and certainly it demands faith in its professors. But what practical system that has to do with conduct does not? Trace to its last analysis the evidence on which repose the sanctities of domestic life, the inheritance of property, the right of our

[1] *Principles of Science*, ii. p. 443.

[2] *Ethics*, bk. i. c. iii. § 4, 5; bk. ii. c. ii. § 3.

gracious Queen to the throne which she adorns, and you will find yourselves brought to bay by an objection which is from a legal point of view unanswerable, namely, that the evidence is of a kind which cannot be tested. The whole edifice rests in every case on the unconfirmed veracity of a single woman. Yes! the right to every title and property in the land rests on no other foundation than our belief in the chastity and truthfulness of the mothers of England. So true is it, as Bishop Butler says, that "probability is the guide of life." The probability for the Resurrection of Christ is historically so overwhelming that much more is needed to upset it than the guesswork theories, for the most part mutually destructive, which have been directed against it during its long and diversified career. The existence of Christianity, with its marvellous history and beneficent influence on mankind, is a standing attestation of the Resurrection of Jesus. Rob it of its miraculous origin, and Christianity itself becomes a miracle which has to be accounted for. It stands absolutely alone in the history of religions. Putting aside other considerations of great importance, the whole organization of Christianity, its sacraments, its discipline, its ritual, are all based upon belief in our Lord's Resurrection

and Ascension as fundamental facts and theological axioms. I submit therefore that those who reject the Resurrection (of which the Ascension is an inevitable consequence) are bound to explain the genesis of the Christian Church. Abolish belief in the Resurrection, and the Christian Church becomes an effect without a cause.[1] Moreover, if the Gospel narrative is not true, the portraiture of such a character as that of Jesus stands alone in the literature of mankind. It is a perfect character. There is nothing approaching to it in history or romance. To have imagined such a character and sustained it to the end would in itself be little short of miraculous. Yet this is what we find in the story of the four Evangelists. Then consider the theology and ethics of the Christian Church—so immeasurably superior to all previous systems and polities. That this should have been conceived by a Galilean peasant and launched upon the world with perfect confidence as to its success is incredible.

[1] To save myself from a chance accusation of plagiarism, I had better state that the substance of this Lecture appeared partly in a review of *Supernatural Religion* in *Fraser's Magazine* of September, 1874, and partly in an article on *The Rationale of Miracles* in the *Saturday Review* of April 29, 1876, both written by myself.

X.

"AND ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN."

CHRIST'S RESURRECTION

OUR Lord's Ascension is the necessary sequel to His Resurrection. All who had previously been restored to life merely returned to their former natural condition. It was a respite, not a deliverance. But Jesus rose from the dead, "no more to return to corruption."[1] He was no longer subject to the known laws of the visible universe. Physical barriers ceased to exist for Him. He appeared in a room suddenly, and as suddenly vanished, "the doors being shut."[2]

[1] Acts xiii. 34.

[2] Attempts, which appear to me as deficient in reverence as in philosophy, have been made by Christian apologists to explain away the essential properties of our Lord's spiritual Body. The late Dr. Vogan, for example (*The Doctrine of the Eucharist*, pp. 558–560), believed that our Lord's sudden transitions from the invisible to the visible, and *vice versâ*, were miraculous; but he argues seriously that the subject of the miracle was not Christ's Body, but the closed door and the circumambient air. "We can suppose," he says, "that by His Divine power the doors opened of their own accord for His admission." "A body will disappear to one if the rays of light from

Distance offered no impediment to His knowledge or to His presence. He heard the conversation of the sorrowing disciples on the way to Emmaus, and immediately joined them. And when "their eyes were opened, and they knew Him, He vanished out of their sight."[1] In short, His humanity now be-

it be intercepted, or if he will even close his eyes. And He who could still the raging sea, could also change or suspend the properties of the air, so as to prevent His Person being seen through it"! What is gained by criticism of this sort? The explanation which I have ventured to suggest in the text is in harmony with the established facts of science; Dr. Vogan's is in direct collision with them, and requires, moreover, a series of violent and totally gratuitous assumptions. *E.g.*, how did our Lord pass from place to place? If His Body was still subject to the laws of Nature He must have proceeded by ordinary locomotion, remaining visible as before His Death, but "changing the properties of the air" as He went along, so that mortal eyes should not behold Him. And how did He ascend into heaven? Dr. Vogan's reasoning would compel us to believe that "the properties of the air" were "changed or suspended" in order to enable our Lord's Body to mount through space against the force of gravity. An explanation which is infinitely harder to believe than the thing to be explained is surely an exercise of perverse folly.

[1] Literally, "He ceased to be seen by them;" implying that His appearances and disappearances were not by way of locomotion, but by His acting or ceasing to act on their visual organs. How this might have happened in perfect consistency with scientific facts I have endeavoured to explain in the text. It is significant that nearly all the apparitions of spiritual beings recorded in the New Testament, including our Lord's appearances after His Resurrection, are described by a verb which strictly means "became visible." *E.g.*, Moses and Elijah "became visible" (ὤφθησαν) to the three disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration (St. Matt. xvii. 3); St. Mark says

longed normally to the spiritual world, as it had previously done to the natural, and could not be apprehended by man's ordinary senses. By His Ascension, therefore, we mean His definite retirement into the spiritual world. But where is the spiritual world into which He ascended? Let us see what the Bible has to say upon the subject, and then compare its revelations with those of physical science.

If we are to believe the Bible, the spiritual world is not a region far away in space, but a higher plane of being, permeating the natural world and requiring spiritual faculties to apprehend it. We are thus in the condition of a man born deaf and blind into this world of solid matter. He is in the midst of two worlds of which he knows next to nothing—the worlds of form and colour, and of melodious and harmonious sounds. For him the abounding beauties of Nature do not exist. He cannot reach them by travelling through space. He might visit every world in the visible universe in search of them, but his search

(ix. 4), *ὤφθη αὐτοῖς Ἠλίας σὺν Μωσεῖ*; St. Luke (ix. 31) describes Moses and Elijah as *ὀφθεντες ἐν δόξῃ*. The same verb is used to describe the appearance of the angel to Zecharias in the Temple (St. Luke i. 11); of the angel which "strengthened" Jesus in Gethsemane (St. Luke xxii. 43); of our Lord to Peter (St. Luke xxiv. 34); of God to Abraham (Acts vii. 2); of Jesus to Saul (Acts ix. 17, and xxvi. 16).

would be in vain, because what he needs is not a change in his surroundings, but a change in himself. Open his eyes and ears, and then, without any change of place, he finds himself introduced into the worlds which he sought in vain by changing his environment. A change in his own organism was all that was required.

This is the kind of relation in which Holy Scripture represents us as standing towards the spiritual world. Let us take a few instances.

When Elijah was about to leave the earth, and Elisha prayed for "a double portion of the spirit" of his departing master, the latter answered, "Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless, *if thou see me* when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so." What did the prophet mean by "if thou see me when I am taken from thee"? Surely this: that if Elisha was able to see the spiritual transformation which his master was about to undergo, that would in itself be a sufficient proof to him that spiritual organs were opened within him which would place him in communication with the spiritual world. Elisha did see the translation of his master, and found himself at once endowed with powers beyond the reach of man's ordinary faculties, including the gift of seership, which enabled him to

reveal to his sovereign the secret counsels of the King of Syria, who consequently sent an army to arrest him. "And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host encompassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray Thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha."[1]

It is evident that the prophet's servant was for the moment endowed with his master's preternatural vision. His bodily eyes, in their normal condition, saw only the Syrian host. In answer to the prophet's prayer, the young man's sight was so etherealized that he was able to see the spiritual host that encompassed his master.

In St. Luke's Gospel[2] we read—"Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also being baptized and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from

[1] 2 Kings vi. 15–17. [2] iii. 21, 22.

heaven, which said, Thou art My beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased." In St. Matthew's account the expression is, "The heavens were opened *unto Him.*" The heaven that was thus opened was clearly not a distant region, but a state of being close at hand, which could only be spiritually discerned.

Another incident of similar import in our Lord's life is related in St. John's Gospel:[1] "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy Name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to Him." That is to say, the heavenly voice which fell in articulate accents on the sensitive ears of our Saviour sounded like the rumbling of distant thunder on the duller organs of those who were about Him.

I believe that some of the discrepancies in the Gospel record of our Lord's Resurrection may be explained in that way. Woman's greater refinement and delicacy of organization makes her probably more sensitive than man to spiritual influences; and this is probably the reason why the devout women

[1] xii. 27-29.

who visited the tomb of the risen Saviour saw further into the spiritual world than Peter and John. Mary Magdalene, whose absorbing love and poignant grief had doubtless quickened her spiritual perceptions, saw two angels. The other women saw only one. Peter and John saw none. In fact, they each saw more or less in the degree in which they were sensitive to spiritual influences.

The vision of St. Stephen just before he died[1] is in some respects a still more striking illustration of the contiguity of the visible world and the world unseen. "Being full of the Holy Ghost," he "looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God."

Where were the heavens into which the dying martyr gazed? Millions of miles away beyond the starry firmament? Were his bodily eyes miraculously endowed with a telescopic power of traversing in a moment the planetary spaces and looking into a world of supersensuous glories behind them? Is it not plain, on the contrary, that his real self, his spiritual nature, with faculties intensified by the near approach of dissolution, was enabled to see

[1] Acts vii. 55–57.

through the integuments of the natural life into the world of unseen realities which lie above it, not in space, but in altitude of being? The "everlasting doors" were "lifted up," and the proto-martyr was vouchsafed a glimpse into a world of unearthly splendour close to him, and saw his Divine Master standing to receive His brave and loyal servant. The murderers of St. Stephen, on the other hand, saw nothing but the rapt gaze of their victim; for the world which was disclosed to him, though equally close to them, is "spiritually discerned," and they lacked that spiritual insight.

The narrative of St. Paul's conversion is another instance of the spiritual world being revealed in proportion to man's receptivity. According to the account in Acts ix., "the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man." The Apostle himself, on the other hand, says: "And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of Him that spake to me."[1] This superficial discrepancy is easily explained. St. Paul's companions heard a mere sound; his ear, rendered preternaturally sensitive by his extreme spiritual tension, caught the articulate words in the sound.[2]

[1] Acts xxii. 9. [2] Τὰ φωνηέντα συνέτοισι.

These examples show very plainly what the Bible would have us believe as to the relation between the world of sense and the world of spirit. We are to understand that the world we see is phenomenal, a world of transitory appearances, behind and through which exists a spiritual world into which even mortal man may obtain glimpses in proportion to his purity of heart. We never see the real cause of anything —the hidden power which energizes behind the veil of gross matter. We see effects only, not the source from which they come. Who ever saw any of the potent forces that move and control the visible universe? Who ever saw even a human being in its very self? What we see is merely the exterior covering of the man's self. He remains hidden, and manifests his presence by the movements of the body. And when the spirit leaves the body, the latter becomes dead matter, as inert and lifeless as a stone. All the forces which keep natural bodies in their form are in their last analysis spiritual. The planets do not move in their orbits by the law of gravitation, but according to it. Gravitation is the method according to which an unseen Power acts from and through the spiritual world on the material. The two worlds are thus not divided from each other by distance in space, but by difference of mode. The

material world rests on the spiritual, and is in a state of ceaseless development out of it; and the more spiritualized the human faculties become, the more they see of the spiritual world.

Such is the teaching of the Bible. Let us see what physical science has to say upon the subject.

We speak of five bodily senses; but in strictness of speech we have only one sense—that of touch. Our vision of external objects is nothing else but sensations made on the retina of the eye by contact with the vibrations of an external substance. To produce the sensation of scarlet 477 billion vibrations of the luminiferous ether touch the retina every second. As the vibrations increase in rapidity—in other words, as the waves of light diminish in size—other shades of colour are produced, till we reach the sensation of violet, which is caused by upwards of 700 billions of vibrations. Waves of light above or below these limits are invisible to the human eye; that is, they move too rapidly or too slowly to make any impression on the optic nerve. This is but another way of saying that objects innumerable may exist in the midst of us, spiritual beings and unimaginable forms and colours, of whose presence, though close to us, we are not conscious, because our visual organs are not sufficiently subtile to behold them. A late President

of the British Association, who is equally distinguished as a lawyer and a man of science, records the last word of physical science when he says that "myriads of organized beings may exist imperceptible to our vision even if we were among them."[1] And these invisible shapes and colours are seen not only by higher intelligences than ours, but by creatures infinitely lower than ourselves in the scale of being. Some of the lower animals—eagles and ants, for example—not only see objects at distances which the human eye cannot approach, but are able to discern objects close at hand, so minute or so subtile as to elude the human eye. I do not now refer to what is called "second sight" on the part of dogs and other animals,[2] but to proved cases of superhuman vision. Sir John Lubbock has shown by experiments that ants see

[1] Grove's *Correlation of Physical Forces*, 4th edit., p. 161.

[2] Some cases of this sort are so well authenticated that it seems to me difficult to discredit them without undermining the foundations of evidence altogether. A very distinguished literary friend of mine vouches for the following:—A young lady, who possessed a dog of which she was very fond and which was devoted to her, left home on a visit to friends at a distance. One day, during her absence, her dog, chancing to look out of a drawing-room window, uttered a bark of joy and rushed out upon the lawn, where it began leaping and barking on one spot as if in recognition of an absent friend standing there. Then suddenly stopping, it looked up, uttered a howl of terror, and rushed back trembling into the house. News arrived soon afterwards that at that very time the absent owner of the dog had died.

distinctly the ultra-violet rays of the spectrum, which make no impression whatever on the human eye.[1] In other words, some insects behold a world of surpassing splendour to which, though close to us, we are blind.

The phenomena of sound are parallel with those of sight. Notes above or below a certain pitch, though the air be resonant with them, are inaudible to the human ear. Professor Tyndall explains the reason in his delightful book *On Sound*.[2] Vibrations of sound fewer than 16 in a second give us the sensation of mere inarticulate noise. Vibrations that exceed 16 per second and are fewer than 38,000 per second give us the sensation of musical notes, varying in pitch with the rate of the vibrations. Beyond this limit in either direction the human ear hears nothing, though millions of sounds are sweeping past it without intermission—sounds that are not only audible but loud to the ears of more sensitive creatures. Professor Tyndall gives the following illustration :—

"I once crossed a Swiss mountain in company with a friend; a donkey was in advance of us, and the dull tramp of the animal was heard by my companion; but to me this sound was almost masked by

[1] See Report of Sir John Lubbock's experiments in the *Standard* of June 3, 1881.

[2] Pp. 72–75.

the shrill chirruping of innumerable insects which thronged the adjacent grass. My friend heard nothing of this: it lay quite beyond the range of his hearing."[1]

Professor Tyndall's ear was sensitive to the quick vibrations, but scarcely heard the slow. His friend's ear caught the impressions of the slow vibrations, but heard nothing of the quick. A letter in the *Times* of November 13, 1874, throws some more light on this interesting subject. The writer, who signs himself "C. J. G.," says:—

"Adapting the concluding sentences of the letter of the Rev. F. O. Morris, in the *Times* of Saturday, it may be observed that there are doubtless more sounds uttered on the earth and in the air than can reach our ears. It is well known that to many persons the grasshopper and the bat are dumb, and it is probable that moths and other insects attract each

[1] Another illustration of this fact is given in Mr. Skertchly's *Dahomey As It Is*, pp. 50–51. Speaking of the large bats of that region, he says: "They utter a sharp chirrup, something like the squeak of a rat, but very much higher in pitch, so high indeed that I have frequently come across individuals whose acoustic powers had not sufficient range to permit of their hearing the note; and on more than one occasion I have said to Buchan" (his half-caste servant). "'What a noise these bats are making!' Upon which he has observed to me, 'Bats have no mouths for talking,' he being perfectly unconscious of their vocal powers."

other by calls inaudible to us rather than by scent. One night, a few years ago, I had a female tiger-moth in a gauze cage, in a room opening into a garden. I had reared the moth from a caterpillar myself. The room was full of tobacco smoke, and the garden was in the middle of a town; yet in less than two hours no less than five male tiger-moths flew to the cage. Though I have sat in the same room hundreds of nights with the window open and a light burning, I never, before or since, knew a tiger-moth to be attracted thither. It seems almost impossible that these moths could have been led to the spot from other walled-in, and in some cases distant, gardens in any other way but by a call in the stillness of the night. But the captive moth made no perceptible noise even with its wings."

In view of these facts there is nothing unreasonable in believing that persons in a state of high spiritual tension may be cognizant of sights and sounds which make no impression, or only a vague and meaningless impression, on the multitude. The story of Jessie Cameron is well known and well authenticated. She heard in Lucknow the bagpipes of the relieving army many hours before the sound could reach ordinary human ears. Indeed, when we think of the wonders of the telephone and microphone, in combination with

the scientific fact that vibrations of the atmosphere started by the human voice or otherwise never cease, each wave keeping its individual identity though crossed by myriads of others, like the concentric circlets formed in a pool of water by the fall of a pebble, it would be rash to reject almost any wonder merely on the ground of its being opposed to the experience of mankind hitherto. When travellers tell us that they sometimes hear, in the solitude of a distant desert, the sound of their village bells at home,[1] it is probably nothing but an illusion of the imagination. And yet have we a right to say that it is absolutely impossible? The vibrations caused by the volcanic explosion of Krakatoa in 1883 reached Greenwich in a few hours. In his eloquent fragment in the series of Bridgewater Treatises the late Professor Babbage compares the atmosphere to a vast library, on whose pages is registered unceasingly all that man has ever said or woman whispered. And when we reflect, to quote the words of an eloquent writer, "that there are waves of light and sound of which our dull senses take no cognizance, that there is a great difference even in human perceptivity, and that some men, more gifted than others, can see colours or hear sounds which are invisible or inaudible

[1] Kinglake, in his *Eöthen*, relates one of these experiences.

to the great bulk of mankind, you will appreciate how possible it is that there may be a world of spiritual existences around us—inhabiting this same globe enjoying the same nature—of which we have no perception; that, in fact, the wonders of the New Jerusalem may be in our midst, and the songs of the angelic hosts filling the air with their celestial harmony, although unheard and unseen by us."[1] Truly "there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our philosophy."

We read in the Apocalypse:[2] "And every created thing which is in the heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and on the sea, and all things that are in them, heard I saying, Unto Him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, be the blessing, and the honour, and the glory, and the dominion, for ever and ever." This, of course, is poetry; but, like all real poetry, it rests on a basis of truth. I have on a former occasion referred to the ceaseless movements and voices of Nature even in substances which appear to be solid and inert. Every particle of matter, every molecule in space, has its own rhythmical movement and ceaseless melody unconsciously hymning the praises of its Maker. "They rest not day and night,"

[1] *Religion and Chemistry*, by Professor J. P. Cooke, p. 107.
[2] v. 13.

proclaiming the glory of the Creator, is as true of the atoms which compose the material universe as of the intelligent beings who sing their hallelujahs in the courts of heaven. The Hebrew Psalmist anticipated the conclusions of modern science when he represents the heavens as thus "declaring the glory of God;" Job also, when he describes "the morning stars" and "the sons of God" as "singing together" in a choir of eucharistic adoration.

> "Look how the floor of heaven
> Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold.
> There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
> But in his motion like an angel sings,
> Still choiring to the young-eyed cherubims.
> Such harmony is in immortal souls;
> But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
> Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it." [1]

Let us pursue the subject a little further in the light cast upon it by the discoveries of modern science. We have already seen that the atmosphere which surrounds this earth, and which is essential to every form of terrestrial life, is a real substance, invisible, subtile, elastic, and irresistibly powerful. In this diffused medium all forms of existences register themselves, print their biographies in vibrations of imperishable sounds, only a small fraction of which

[1] *Merchant of Venice*, Act v. sc. 1.

are audible to human ears. But far more wonderful than the atmosphere is the luminiferous ether which is the medium of light. It penetrates not only the atmosphere, but all substances, however dense and solid; and it is believed, on scientific grounds, to pervade the universe, and to register all existences and phenomena by its vibrations.

"We are asked by physical philosophers to give up all our ordinary prepossessions, and believe that the interstellar space which seemed so empty is not empty at all, but filled with something immensely more solid and elastic than steel. As Dr. Young himself remarked, 'the luminiferous ether, pervading all space and penetrating all substances, is not only highly elastic, but absolutely solid!!!' Sir John Herschel has calculated the amount of force which may be supposed, according to the undulatory theory of light, to be exerted at each point in space, and finds it to be 1,148,000,000,000 times the elastic force of ordinary air at the earth's surface; so that the pressure of the ether upon a square inch of surface must be about 17,000,000,000,000, or seventeen billions of pounds. Yet we live and move without appreciable resistance in this medium, indefinitely harder and more elastic than adamant. All our ordinary notions must be laid aside in contemplating such an hypothesis;

yet it is no more than the observed phenomena of light and heat force us to accept. We cannot deny even the strange suggestion of Dr. Young, that there may be independent worlds, some possibly existing in different parts of space, *but others perhaps pervading each other, unseen and unknown, in the same space.* For if we are bound to admit the conception of this adamantine firmament, it is equally easy to admit a plurality of such. We see then that mere difficulties of conception must not in the least discredit a theory which otherwise agrees with facts, *and we must only reject hypotheses which are inconceivable in the sense of breaking distinctly the primary laws of thought and Nature.*"[1]

In face of these mysteries of physical science, how rash are the cavils against our Lord's Resurrection and Ascension, and His passing through solid substances without impediment. If "something immensely more solid and elastic than steel" and "indefinitely harder and more elastic than adamant" can pass through solid substance, what is there incredible in a still more subtile substance, like our Lord's spiritual Body, moving unimpeded by any of the barriers which arrest our motion? And do not these wonderful disclosures of the secrets of Nature help

[1] *The Principles of Science*, by W. S. Jevons, vol. ii. pp. 144, 145.

us to get some idea of the Divine Omnipotence? A man is present not simply on the few inches of ground on which he stands, but as far as his eyes and ears can reach. If he had organs that would put him, as regards sight and hearing, in communication with beings a million of miles away, he would be really present with them. Now, if infinite space is pervaded by a subtile medium which penetrates all known substances and registers every movement, is it incomprehensible that a Being such as we conceive God to be, occupying the centre of the universe, should have continuous cognizance of every part of it, either directly or through the recording vibration of the omnipresent ether? May there not be an even subtiler medium than this luminiferous ether which registers every sight and sound in the universe from moment to moment? Let us remember that to pure spirits all material substances known to us are practically non-existent. The visible world and the unseen are simply incommensurable: we cannot argue from the impossibilities of the one to those of the other. The Schoolmen probably meant no more than this when they debated how many angels could stand on the point of a needle—a question which has furnished an abundance of cheap ridicule against them. Yet let us see what physical science has to say on that subject:

"Scientific method leads us to the inevitable conception of an infinite series of successive orders of infinitely small quantities. If so, there is nothing improbable in the existence of a myriad universes within the compass of a needle's point, each with its stellar systems and its suns and planets in number and variety unlimited. Science does nothing to reduce the number of strange things that we may believe. When fairly pursued it makes large drafts upon our powers of comprehension and belief."[1]

It does indeed. There is not a mystery of the Christian Faith which may not be paralleled by a mystery of science quite as staggering to the human understanding. Our Lord and three of His Apostles tell us that the visible universe is tending towards a catastrophe in which "the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken;" when "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat;" to be succeeded, "according to His promise," by "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." Such is the doctrine of the Gospel—that "the things which are seen are temporal," moving on to a cataclysm out of which a new order of things shall emerge. And it has often been the butt of the

[1] *The Principles of Science*, p. 146.

scorner, who imagined that it was refuted by the testimony of physical science. But physical science has come round to the doctrine of the Gospel. Scientific men are now, I believe, agreed that, owing to ethereal friction and the constant dissipation of energy throughout the visible universe, the smaller bodies will eventually fall into the larger, and these larger into still larger, till at last "the things which are seen" "shall melt with the fervent heat" of a tremendous collision and disappear, being, as the authors of *The Unseen Universe* argue, absorbed into the Spiritual Universe.[1]

By our Lord's Ascension into Heaven, then, we mean His disappearance into the spiritual realm which pervades the material. And that realm, as He has Himself assured us, consists of various spheres of being. The common notion about heaven, I suppose, is that it is one vast place in which the whole human race, together with the angels, shall be assembled after the general Judgment, and there live for ever in ceaseless adoration. Very different is the view which our Lord gives us of heaven. He describes it as a world of many abodes. "In My Father's house are many dwelling-places; if it were not so, I would have

[1] *The Unseen Universe*, pp. 165, 166, 197; Prof. Clifford in *Fortnightly Review*, June, 1875.

told you: I go to prepare a place for you."[1] "If it were not so, I would have told you." In other words, it is natural to expect that there should be different dwelling-places, different spheres of being, different planes of existences in the spiritual world; so natural indeed is it that, were it otherwise, our Lord would have made a special revelation on the subject. I may observe in passing that we may take this gracious saying as an axiom in the spiritual life. Our instincts, the instincts of universal humanity—belief in the efficacy of prayer, for example, and in immortality—must have their appropriate satisfaction, or the God of Nature would have warned us: "If it were not so I would have told you." Certainly our own instincts confirm our Lord's declaration that there are many modes and spheres of life in the world unseen. Human beings are pouring daily into the spiritual world at the rate of sixty a minute. This vast multitude pass out of this life in every stage of moral development or degeneration, and it stands to reason that they are not all equally fitted for the same abode in the world of spirits. Even those who make the best of their opportunities here do not necessarily inhabit the same abode in the next world. The faithful servant, who increased his lord's money tenfold, received

[1] St. John xiv. 2.

"authority over ten cities;" while he whose pound gained five more was made ruler "over five cities." Both were found to be equally "good and faithful;" but they differed in original capacity, and were treated accordingly. Each received the full measure of his ability to enjoy. Ten cities would have been too many for the one; five would have been too few for the other. But the capacity for present enjoyment is no measure of the capacity for future enjoyment. Progress is the law of moral and intellectual life, and in heaven the progress will be unceasing, there being nothing to stop or impede it. "They will go from strength to strength."[1] The faculties will expand by unwearied exercise, and will receive fresh accessions of enjoyment as they are able to bear it. There will thus be an endless ascent from sphere to sphere in the lives of heaven, a constant progression through the "many dwelling-places" of which our Lord speaks. Each acquisition of knowledge will be a stepping-stone to further discoveries. Insatiable curiosity, ever gratified but never quenched, is the law of the heavenly life, as "alps on alps arise" on its ever-widening horizon. The common notion that heaven is one sphere of being equally adapted to all its inhabitants, angelic and human, is thoroughly unscriptural.

[1] Ps. lxxxiv. 7.

The plurality of the heavens is not only taught in numberless passages both in the Old and New Testaments, but also in the Prayer which our Lord Himself has taught us, where He bids us to say, "Our Father which art in the heavens;" which is the correct translation.

Our Lord, then, "ascended into heaven," "to prepare a place" for His people; to "open the kingdom of heaven to all believers:" to all believers, because faith is the eye which enables the soul to see heaven. But how does He open the kingdom of heaven? "By a new and living way which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh."[1] What are we to understand by this pregnant expression? Surely that our Lord's Incarnation is the medium of communication between the natural life and the spiritual. It is, in the first place, as I have already explained, the copula that unites the creation with the Creator. It is, in a more restricted sense, a fresh source of purified life to the sinful children of Adam. "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."[2] How do all men die in Adam? By deriving from him the germ of a perverted life, a nature biased towards evil by the now recognized law of heredity. How are all to be made alive in

[1] Heb. x. 20. [2] 1 Cor. xv. 22.

Christ? By receiving from Him the germ of a new life, which, if they do not stifle it, will gradually leaven the old nature and take its place. Our connection with fallen humanity is an organic connection: the first Adam has passed on his injured nature to his descendants. If then, as St. Paul assures us, the Son of God became incarnate that He might be "the New Man," the "Second Adam," from whom a fresh supply of life might circulate through our impoverished nature, does it not follow that our connection with Him must also be organic? How else can we be "members of Christ," as our Catechism has it? And the Catechism does but follow the stronger language of St. Paul, who compares the connection between Christ and us with that between Adam and his wife, who was made "bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh." Christians, he says, "are limbs of His body, out of His flesh and His bones."[1] And elsewhere: "The first man Adam was made a living soul, the Last Adam was made a life-giving (ζωοποιοῦν) spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the Second Man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy;

[1] Eph. v. 30.

and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."[1] These words can bear only one meaning, namely, that the connection with "the Last Adam" is just as real as the connection with the first. Our Lord Himself conveys the same idea under the image of the life-giving Vine and its branches; and still more emphatically in the sacramental discourse recorded in the sixth chapter of St. John's Gospel. There He calls Himself "the Bread of life," "the living Bread which came down from heaven." And then more plainly: "The Bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." And when His hearers questioned the possibility of such a gift, He repeated His startling assertion with a solemn asseveration: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, *hath* eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. . . . Many therefore of His disciples, when they had heard his, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? . . . From that time many of His dis-

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 45–49.

ciples went back, and walked no more with Him." And He would not call them back by watering down His "hard saying;" on the contrary, He asked the Twelve, "Will ye also go away?"

How shall we understand His words? They are "an hard saying" still. Shall we call them figurative? In one sense all language is figurative. It is the clothing, not the skin of thought, and never adequately expresses the truth. Our Lord's language here is figurative in the sense that it conveys less, not more, than the words imply. "It is the spirit," He explained, "that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak to you are spirit and are life." That is to say, when He spoke of giving His flesh and blood as the food of His people, He did not mean by flesh and blood anything that the bodily senses could apprehend or a chemist could analyze into its elements. In that sense our Lord's flesh and blood are certainly not present in the Eucharist, or indeed anywhere. It is true that He called on His disciples to testify to His "flesh and bones" after His Resurrection; but His body was certainly not such flesh and bones as we have experience of. What we call flesh and bones is a consolidation of gases which may be resolved into their elements; and then they cease to be flesh and bones. But while they remain

flesh and bones they are subject to decay, and the ceaseless waste of tissue requires to be repaired by the assimilation of congenial nutriment. Our Lord's Resurrection Body, on the other hand, subsists without food, and is independent of the laws of physics. "Flesh and blood," as we know them, "cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption."[1]

"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing." In these words our Lord lays down a general truth applicable to all life. Even in material things it is not the gross mass of palpable particles that "profiteth," but "the spirit," the inner essence, which is too subtile for the apprehension of the senses, too ethereal for the skill of science. "It is the spirit that quickeneth" throughout the realm of Nature. Matter in all its forms is an evolution from a spiritual cause which has its source in the Divine Will. "In Him we live, and move, and have our being," and apart from Him there can be no life. In this sense the whole universe of created being may be said with exact truth to feed upon its God. All Nature is thus in a manner a sacramental system "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace" energizing within it. By the "hard

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 50.

saying" which shocked the people of Capernaum, and many others since their day, we are to understand Christ's essential humanity. He would have us understand that this is the source and sustaining nutriment of our spiritual life.

But how can our Lord's humanity be thus disseminated germinally among the millions of His members? To which I answer; How can the flesh and blood—that is, the essential humanity—of Adam be germinally disseminated among the millions of his descendants? We know that it is so, and shall we declare that to be impossible to God Incarnate which is an admitted fact in the case of fallen Adam? Shall the first Adam be capable of propagating his perverted nature among all the human beings who have come out of his loins? And shall the Second Adam be incapable of imparting His life-giving humanity through channels of His own appointment? There is a real presence, in no figure of speech but in stern truth, of Adam in all his children. But there is a fundamental difference between Adam's presence through the long line of his offspring and Christ's Sacramental Presence. Adam is present in his nature, but not personally; Christ is present in His human nature, and also Personally, for His Person, being Divine, is insep-

arable from His humanity, and is, in fact, omnipresent. There is scarcely a greater name in the history of philosophy than Leibnitz, a man of universal genius, sound judgment, and master of all the learning of his time. A sincere Protestant himself, he had no difficulty in accepting the doctrine of the Real Presence in the Sacrament, on which he expresses himself as follows in one of his letters to the Port-Royalist Arnauld: "As I have been the first to discover that the essence of a body does not consist in extension, but in motion, and hence that the substance or nature of a body, even according to Aristotle's definition, is the principle of motion (ἐντελεχεια), and that this principle or substance of the body has no extension, I have made it plain how God can be clearly and distinctly understood to cause the substance of the same body to exist in many different places."[1]

The fact is, the impugners of the sacramental system of the Church take too contracted a view of God's relation to the material universe. They find it hard to believe that spiritual energy can be imparted through material channels—water, or bread and wine. But surely the wonder would be if it were not so.

[1] Cf. his *System of Theology* (translated by Dr. Russell), pp. 99, 100; also Sir W. Hamilton's *Discussions in Philosophy*, pp. 604–607.

Does any of His gifts reach us except through some material agency? What were the prophets of old, what is the Bible, what is prayer, but material organs of communication between man and God? Let us purge our minds of carnal notions and rise above the grovelling literalism of the people of Capernaum, who imagined that the flesh and blood with which Jesus offered to feed them meant portions of ponderable matter. "They are spirit and they are life," and all the more real on that account.

There is also another and most true sense in which Christ has become the food of mankind. His character has been absorbed into the constitution of the governing races of mankind, and has effected a moral transformation unique in the history of our race. The nations of Christendom are still, alas! in practice far behind the standard of their Christian profession and recognized ideal. Yet, in spite of all drawbacks, Christendom is divided by an immeasurable chasm of moral superiority from the whole Pagan world in ancient or modern times. Vices as vile as any recorded in the annals of heathendom may prevail among Christian nations, for the corruption of the best is proverbially the worst kind of corruption; but at least these vices do not hold open revel, and still less do they receive the consecration of religion! They court the shade

and lurk in secret places, thereby acknowledging that they are under the ban of Christianity. No other teacher has ever dared to offer himself as the food of mankind, that he might thereby transform the race into his own likeness. This is what Jesus did, and He has made good His promise. His spirit and moral qualities are passing daily into the lives of millions of human beings, purifying and ennobling them. It is in this way that He fulfils His promise of not leaving His followers "orphans:" "I will not leave you orphans: I will come to you."[1] It is thus that He "prepares a place" for each of us in one of the "many abodes" of His Father's realm.

[1] St. John xiv. 18.

XI.

"I BELIEVE ONE CATHOLIC AND APOSTOLIC CHURCH."

NOTES OF THE CHURCH.

THE Nicene Creed gives us three notes of the Church, namely, "One," "Catholic," "Apostolic;" to which the Apostles' Creed adds "Holy." These are the external marks of the Church. But what is it in its essence? What are its ends, its functions, its constitution? In the New Testament it is called by various names, the most common being a "Kingdom," of which Christ is the King, and a "Body," of which He is the Head. Both expressions imply an organism, that is, a living structure whose various parts are bound together by a principle of unity which makes them work harmoniously towards one common end A tree is an organism. Trunk, roots, branches, bark, leaves, sap perform their separate functions, not independently of each other, but in subordination to the law of unity which binds them all into one individual entity animated by a common life. The human body is an organism

of a similar kind, and St. Paul compares, in an elaborate passage, its organic unity and diversified parts and operations with the unity in plurality of the Church of Christ. "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God Which worketh all in all. . . . For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we are all baptized unto one body. . . . For the body is not one member, but many. . . . If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? if the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body as it hath pleased Him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. . . . And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members of it severally." A kingdom also is an organism, a body politic, with one national spirit

diffused and energizing through its component parts and cementing them into one organic whole. In defining the Church, then, as a "Kingdom," or "Body," it is plain that our Lord and His Apostles meant us to understand that it was not to be a mere fortuitous aggregation of individuals, like a school of thought or of philosophy, or like some voluntary association of human beings formed for the promotion of some industrial or benevolent end, but that, on the contrary, it was to be a Divine Institution, subject to the laws of organic growth and development. Hence our Lord compares it to "a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof." The man who sowed the mustard seed was but an instrument in the furtherance of a Divine purpose. The secret potentialities of the seed did not come from him, nor the mysterious process by which it grew into a tree. He co-operated with the will of God, as sun and rain and soil co-operated with it, and the predestined result followed. The Christian Church is thus a Divine creation, not an ordinary human institution. Man did not make her, and the "ministers and stewards" of her Sacraments have no more original

power than had the husbandman who planted the mustard seed in his field.

Such being the origin of the Church, what is her end? For what purpose was she founded? Her end is twofold: first, to guard and propagate revealed truth; secondly, to be, in the pregnant language of Moehler, an organ for "the extension of the Incarnation" to the fallen race of man. Let us consider the Church in these two aspects.

1. She is a Divinely appointed guardian and preacher of revealed truth. I say revealed, not Divine truth. For all truths are equally Divine. But there are many truths which need no special revelation: truths of geometry, of philosophy, of physical science, of politics, and the like. These man can discover for himself by means of the faculties which God has given him. But there is a body of truths which lie outside the range of the human reason—those, namely, which relate to the spiritual world. Reason, indeed, apprehended some of them imperfectly and groped instinctively after others, such as the existence of God, the immortality of the soul, the doctrine of retribution, which we find prevalent among Pagan nations. But they were held dimly and in fragments only, not in their totality and their correlation. These truths God revealed gradually, through the Hebrew

nation, till "the fulness of time" when Christ "brought life and immortality to light." Hence St. Jude exhorts Christians to "contend earnestly for the faith which was *once for all* delivered to the saints."[1] Similarly St. Paul bids Timothy "hold fast the form (ὑποτύπωσις, *i.e.* outline or summary) of sound words which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. The good deposit (Τὴν καλὴν παρακαταθήκην) which was committed unto thee guard through the Holy Ghost Which dwelleth in us."[2] The Christian Faith is therefore a "deposit," a body of Divine truths delivered over to the custody of the Christian Church—"the Church of the living God," which is "the pillar and ground of the truth."[3] This is the great distinction between revealed truth and other truths. They are in a state of indefinite progression. Their bulk increases year by year, and new discoveries are constantly exploding errors which had been held as truths. For human reason being fallible, its progress is not in a straight line, but zigzag, like the mountain climber, who is obliged to tack as he proceeds, and is forced occasionally to retrace his steps in order to avoid a precipice here, or a ravine there, which he had not observed from his lower altitude.

[1] Verse 3. "The saints" here, and in most parts of the New Testament, means Christians.

[2] 2 Tim. i. 13-14.

[3] 1 Tim. iii. 15.

The creed of Christendom, on the other hand, was delivered "once for all;" from which it follows that there can be no fresh accretion, no new articles of faith. Nothing can be an article of faith now which was not an article of faith in the time of St. Paul.

But if that be so, how are we to defend the Nicene Creed, which is undoubtedly in one sense an addition to "the form of sound words" which St. Paul bids Timothy to guard? The consubstantiality of the Son with the Father was imposed as an article of necessary faith in the Council of Nicæa, and was inserted into the universal creed of the Church. But was that dogma really an addition to the Faith? Was it an article of faith in the sense of revealing something which Christians had not believed before? A little reflection will show that it was not. The Church assembled at the Council of Nicæa to examine and pass judgment on the heresy of Arius. What did Arius teach? It was extremely difficult for some time to find out what he really held, so subtle and agile and evasive was his method of controversy. He accepted the Incarnation in a sense. He acknowledged the Pre-existence of Christ, His miraculous Conception and Birth, His Resurrection and Ascension. Nay, more: he admitted that He was the Logos of the Father and the Creator of the universe. In short,

there is not a title or an attribute ascribed to our Lord in the Bible which Arius did not freely grant to Him. But when driven into a corner by the superior dialectic of the youthful Athanasius, he declared that "there was a time when Christ was not." That was, of course, to degrade Christ to the rank of a mere creature, and it involved Arius, moreover, in the guilt of idolatry; for to offer Divine worship to a creature, though "the highest of the creatures," as Arius confessed Christ to be, was formal idolatry; the distance between the highest creature and the lowest being insignificant as compared with the gulf between the highest creature and Infinite God. Now, if a Christian had at any time from the first Christian Pentecost maintained that Christ was a mere creature, he would undoubtedly have been condemned as a heretic. The formula of the Nicene Council, then, added nothing to the original deposit of faith, nothing to the substance of Christian belief. What it did was to guard the Divinity of Christ by a definition which effectually protected the creed of the Church from mutilation. There is, therefore, no analogy between the additions made in the Nicene Creed and the imposition on Christians, as articles of faith, of what had previously been debatable and debated opinions. It is of the essence of an article of necessary Christian faith,

not merely that it should be true, but that it should belong to the original deposit. Gravitation and capillary attraction are true as facts of physical science; but to insist on belief in them as articles of Christian communion would be a heresy.

But why should such an organization as the Church be necessary to guard the truths of Christianity? One very important reason is that there is a tendency in human language, left to itself, to shed portions of its meaning, and also to acquire fresh meanings as it passes through the minds of successive generations. "Person," "parson," "conversation," "sacrament," "emperor," "eucharist," are familiar illustrations of this process. The consequence is that where there is no organized living tradition keeping alive and interpreting through the ages all the ideas which the words originally connoted, the ideas fade from memory one by one, till at last they vanish entirely, and their place is usurped by other and perhaps contrary ideas.[1] This explains the tendency to run

[1] The late John Stuart Mill has a striking and valuable passage on this point which is too long to quote at length. I quote the following as a sample:—"Considering, then, that the human mind, in different generations, occupies itself with different things, and in one age is led by the circumstances which surround it to fix more of its attention upon one of the properties of a thing, in another age upon another, it is natural and inevitable that in every age a certain portion of our recorded experience and traditional know-

to seed which characterizes the creed of all communities which have separated from the Church. On the other hand, bodies of Christians which have retained their organic connection with the original constitution of the Church may become corrupt in practice, may even distort or overlay the creed with illicit and debasing developments; yet so long as they cling to the ancient formularies and the ecclesiastical organism which is their appointed guardian, they hold within them a recuperative energy which enables them to recover lost ground and occupy their ancient position. Like the tree in Nebuchadnezzar's

ledge, not being continually suggested by the pursuits and inquiries with which mankind are at that time engrossed, should fall asleep, as it were, and fade from the memory. . . . Thus there is a perpetual oscillation in spiritual (I do not mean religious) truths, and in spiritual doctrines of any significance even when not truths. Their meaning is almost always in a process of being lost or of being recovered. Whoever has attended to the history of the more serious convictions of mankind—of the opinions by which the general conduct of their lives is, or as they conceive ought to be, more especially regulated—is aware that, even when recognizing verbally the same doctrines, they attach to them at different periods a greater or less quantity, and even a different kind, of meaning. The words in their original acceptation connoted, and the propositions expressed, a complication of outward facts and inward feelings, to different portions of which the general mind is more particularly alive in different generations of mankind. To common minds, only that portion of the meaning is in each generation suggested of which that generation possesses the counterpart in its own habitual experience."—*System of Logic*, ii. pp. 219–225.

dream, only the stump may remain with its roots in the soil; yet out of that stump branches and leaves and fruit may grow and flourish. So long as the community remains rooted in the original constitution of the Church it holds the potentiality of reproduction.

2. But what is the original constitution of the Church? "It is evident," says the English Book of Common Prayer, "unto all men diligently reading the holy Scripture and ancient Authors, that from the Apostles' time there have been these Orders of Ministers in Christ's Church; Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. . . . And therefore, to the intent that these Orders may be continued, and reverently used and esteemed, in the Church of England, no man shall be accounted or taken to be a lawful Bishop, Priest, or Deacon in the Church of England, or suffered to execute any of the said Functions, except he be called, tried, examined, and admitted thereunto, according to the Form hereafter following, or hath had formerly Episcopal Consecration, or Ordination." The historical assertion made in this passage can no longer be disputed by any one who is competent to weigh the evidence dispassionately. The Bishop of Durham's exhaustive and triumphant vindication of the Ignatian Epistles—a splendid monument of erudition of which the Church of England may well be proud—has

settled the question. The Ignatian Epistles place at least two facts plainly beyond dispute, namely, first, that Diocesan Episcopacy was then the universal and undisputed form of Church government; secondly, that the diocese, under the administration of its Bishop, Presbyters, and Deacons, was the unit of the Church. The Bishop stood at the summit of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. In him the Church was summed up. From him it could be reproduced. This is unquestionably the doctrine of the Ignatian Epistles. The Bishop of Durham has often been quoted as favouring the notion that Episcopacy does not belong to the original constitution of the Church. But in the very essay—his *Dissertation on the Christian Ministry*—to which appeal is made in support of that opinion, Dr. Lightfoot asserts that "unless we have recourse to a sweeping condemnation of received documents, it seems vain to deny that early in the second century the Episcopal Office was firmly and widely established. Thus, during the last three decades of the first century, and consequently during the lifetime of the last surviving Apostle, this change must have been brought about"—the change, that is, from a Presbyterate governed by Apostles to Diocesan Episcopacy. To admit as much as this is surely to admit everything. For if Episcopacy "was

firmly and widely established" during the lifetime of the latest surviving Apostle, it can hardly be disputed that it is the form of Church government which is according to the mind of Christ. "The latest surviving Apostle"—"the disciple whom Jesus loved"—must have learnt, during the forty days' intercourse with the risen Saviour before the Ascension, the mind of his Master on so vital a question, and it is simply inconceivable that he should have sanctioned any ecclesiastical polity which was not in full harmony with his Lord's instructions while "speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God."[1]

Dr. Lightfoot, it is true, argues that Episcopacy grew by way of development out of the needs of the expanding Church. But that does not prove that it was not an integral part of the original design. The Diaconate certainly originated in an unlooked-for emergency, and then became a permanent office in the Christian Ministry. Why should it be thought derogatory to the dignity and authority of the Episcopate that, viewed on its human side, it grew naturally out of the circumstances of the time? Surely this is the ordinary method of Divine Providence. The Aaronic Priesthood was doubtless of Divine origin, and the story of Korah, Dathan, and

[1] Acts i. 3.

their company shows how careful God was to vindicate its Divine authority. Yet the Aaronic Priesthood was instituted in response to the demand of the congregation of Israel. During the Patriarchal period the head of the family was also its priest. And even when the Law was delivered to the Israelites from Mount Sinai there was no regular priesthood to stand between God and His people. They were all regarded as a nation of priests until their own sense of unworthiness caused them to shrink back from the awful privilege. The incident is related by Moses as follows:—

"And it came to pass, when ye heard the voice out of the midst of the darkness, (for the mountain did burn with fire,) that ye came near unto me, even all the heads of your tribes, and your elders; and ye said, Behold, the Lord our God hath shewed us His glory and His greatness, and we have heard His voice out of the midst of the fire: we have seen this day that God doth talk with man, and he liveth. Now therefore why should we die? for this great fire will consume us: if we hear the voice of the Lord our God any more, then we shall die. For who is there of all flesh, that hath heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived? Go thou near, and hear all

that the Lord our God shall say: and speak thou unto us all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee; and we will hear it, and do it. And the Lord heard the voice of your words, when ye spake unto me; and the Lord said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken unto thee: they have well said all that they have spoken."[1]

Accordingly Aaron and his sons were consecrated to the priesthood, and they became the appointed mediators between Jehovah and the congregation of Israel. The Jewish Priesthood, therefore, and indeed priesthood everywhere—in other words, the principle of sacerdotalism—is the natural outcome of man's instinctive feeling of unworthiness to hold, in his fallen condition, direct intercourse with his Maker. This does not arise so much from fear of God's wrath as from a sense of incongruity between His awful majesty and unspeakable perfections and our own selfishness and vileness. We instinctively shrink from a nature which we feel is immeasurably superior to our own; and the more we love that nature, the more we crave for union with it, the more we find ourselves drawn irresistibly toward it—the deeper grows that feeling of unworthiness which drives us, like our first

[1] Deut. v. 25–28.

parents, to hide ourselves from the very presence which is nevertheless our joy and our life. The fear of punishment is not nearly as painful as the fear of losing a love which has possessed us; and hence we all wear masks, more or less opaque, in our intercourse with each other. The very strength of our love is apt to forbid a full disclosure of our inner self to an object of tender human attachment, lest fuller knowledge might dispel the illusion and alienate the love for which we pine :—

> "Each in his hidden sphere of joy or woe,
> Our hermit spirits range and dwell apart;
> Our eyes see all around in gloom or glow
> Hues of their own, fresh borrowed from the heart.
>
> "And it is well. . . .
>
> "For what if Heaven for once its searching light
> Lent to some partial eye, disclosing all
> The rude bad thoughts that in our bosom's night
> Wander at large, nor heed love's gentle thrall?
>
> "Who would not shun the dreary uncouth place?
> As if, fond leaning where her infant slept,
> A mother's arm a serpent should embrace;
> So might we friendless live, and die unwept."

If, then, deep love for a fellow-creature can thus repel while it attracts, it is obvious that this feeling of repulsion must be intensified into a paroxysm of pain when the object of love is the very "King in His beauty," He Who made the heart of man for

Himself, and has never ceased to entice it with "cords of a man, with bands of love."[1] "Pain is the deepest thing in our nature," says Arthur Hallam. It lies latent at the root of our deepest happiness. Sir John Herschel tells a story which shows how a sudden revelation, even of extraordinary material beauty imparts a shock of intolerable pain. While he was one night scanning a cloudless sky, Sirius, in all its dazzling splendour, suddenly crossed the field of his large telescope, and the vision was so beautiful that it gave the astronomer a shock of such acute pain that he was obliged to close his eyes to prevent his fainting. Cardinal Newman illustrates the same idea in his beautiful *Dream of Gerontius*. The disembodied spirit, impelled by irresistible love, rushes from earth into the glory of the Beatific Vision, and then drops, like a singed moth, and sings plaintively, "Take me away," until the unprepared faculties are made fit to bear the overpowering beauty. "For our God is a consuming fire;"[2] and necessarily so to all who are ungodlike. We have a parable of this impressive truth in the incident of the Burning Bush on Horeb, to which I have already referred. "The Bush burnt with fire, and the Bush was not consumed." But the moment Moses "turned aside,"

[1] Hosea xi. 4. [2] Heb. xii. 29.

and approached the glory of the Divine Presence, a warning voice stopped him: "Moses! Moses! Draw not nigh hither." Why? Because God is of necessity "a consuming fire" to anything which is antagonistic to Him. In Nature there is nothing antagonistic to God, for there is no free will to resist Him. "He hath given them a law which shall not be broken," and so they can bear contact with His Presence and live. But in the best of men there is an element of selfishness—that is, of antagonism to Him Whose essence is love, which is the antithesis of selfishness. Therefore God deals mercifully with us, as He dealt of old with Moses when he desired to see His glory: "Thou canst not see My face: for there shall no man see Me, and live. And the Lord said, Behold, there is a place by Me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: and it shall come to pass, while My glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with My hand while I pass by: and I will take away Mine hand, and thou shalt see My back parts: but My face shall not be seen."[1]

Such is the condition of humanity now. It is "in a clift of the rock," shielded by a loving hand, and beholding the "back parts," the afterglow, of the Divine glory, but not able as yet to bear unconsumed

[1] Exod. xxxiii. 20–23.

the Vision of Beauty. We must remember that there is, in Milton's phrase, "darkness from excessive bright" —darkness which is caused by light too bright for unprepared eyes.[1]

But the Israelites were not suffered to rest in the Aaronic Priesthood as a final and unchangeable dispensation. It was a provision suited to man's fallen state, not to his perfection; a remedy for a disease, not the normal condition of health. What the children of Israel were to aim at was to make themselves worthy, as an entire people, to offer acceptable service to Almighty God. The Aaronic Priesthood was a provisional discipline, an object lesson to that end. They were reminded that, in spite of the Mosaic dispensation, they all remained ideally "a kingdom of priests, a holy nation." They were unworthy now to realize that high ideal; but they were not to lose sight of it. They were to strive after it; and to keep them in perpetual remembrance of it, there were several rites of a sacerdotal character, such as the sacrifice of the

[1] ". . . noi semo usciti fuore
Del maggior corpo al ciel ch' è pura luce;
Luce intellettual piena d'amore,
Amor di vero ben pien di letizia,
Letizia che trascende ogni dolzore."
DANTE, *Paradiso*, XXX. 40.

Paschal Lamb, in which the people at large were bidden to participate.

The Christian Ministry is in like manner only a provisional arrangement. St. Peter addresses the whole congregation of Christians in the language in which Moses described the priestly character of ancient Israel. He calls them a "royal priesthood;" an ideal of Christian perfection which St. John saw realized when he heard the saints in bliss giving thanks for having been made "kings and priests unto God." And just as a Hebrew layman could sacrifice the Paschal Lamb, so the Christian layman can perform quasi-sacerdotal functions, such as baptizing and taking his share in the great oblation of the Eucharist—a truth which was symbolized in ancient times, and even now in Eastern Christendom, by the custom of the faithful laity offering the sacramental elements to the officiating minister, who then consecrated them on behalf of the congregation as their representative and ministerial organ. And, what is still more remarkable, the Latin Church in the Middle Ages, when the claims of the priesthood were pushed to extravagant lengths, claimed for the laity a quasi-sacerdotal power even in respect to what was called "sacramental confession." The practice of auricular —that is, private—confession came into vogue by way

of relaxation on the original discipline, which enjoined on penitents a public confession in the presence of the congregation. And the absolution then given was the absolution of the congregation pronounced through the mouth of its ministerial representative. This participation of the laity even in "the power of the keys" is fully recognized by the leading authorities among the Schoolmen. St. Thomas Aquinas, for example, discusses the question "whether confession can ever be made except to a priest," and he decides that a layman may in case of necessity hear a penitent's confession. The layman, he says, cannot complete "the sacrament of penance," since he does not possess the power of granting absolution. But this defect "the High Priest supplies." And therefore "confession made to a layman is in a manner sacramental."[1] Peter Lombard answers in like manner the question "whether it is sufficient to confess to a layman." "If a priest cannot be had," he says, "confession must be made to one's neighbour or com-

[1] "Sed quando necessitas imminet, debet facere pœnitens quod necessitas ex parte sua est, scilicet conteri et confiteri cui potest; qui quamvis sacramentum perficere non possit, ut faciat id quod ex parte sacerdotis est, absolutionem scilicet, *defectum tamen Summus Sacerdos supplet. Nihilominus confessio laico ex defectu sacerdotis facta sacramentalis est quodammodo*, quamvis non sit sacramentum perfectum, quia deest ei quod est ex parte sacerdotis."—*Summ. Theol.*, Supplem., pt. iii. quæst. viii. art. i.

panion," the will being accepted for the deed. "For the lepers were cleansed on their way to show themselves to the priests, before they reached them."[1] Albert Magnus, another great name, goes beyond this; for he affirms that a layman possesses in case of necessity the power of absolving.[2]

Thus we see that at no period of her history has the Church lost sight of the fact that all Christians are potentially and ideally priests of God. If man had never fallen there would have been no need of a special priesthood. All would have been alike worthy to offer God an acceptable service, as all will be hereafter in heaven. This is the ideal at which we are to

[1] *De Sacram.*, lib. iv. distinct. xvii.

[2] He distinguishes between five kinds of absolution. The fourth "est officio ministrorum concessa sacerdotibus. Et ultima ex unitate fidei et caritatis, et hæc pro necessitatis articulo *descendit in omnem hominem ad proximo subveniendum: et hanc potestatem habet laicus in articulo necessitatis*" (*Sent.*, lib. iv. dist. xvii. art. 58–59). Two remarkable instances of confession to laymen have come down to us from the Middle Ages. It is related in *Le Loyal Serviteur* that when Bayard, the Chevalier *sans peur et sans reproche*, received his death-wound on the field of Romagnano, and was carried to his tent, he grasped his sword, and, fixing his eyes on the hilt for a cross, bade his faithful esquire hear his confession. The other example is related by Joinville. When Joinville and his companions were taken prisoners by the Saracens, and were waiting in hourly expectation of death, the Constable of Cyprus knelt down and made his confession to Joinville. "And I gave him," says Joinville, "such absolution as God enabled me to give (Et je lui donnay telle absolucion comme Dieu m'en donnoit le povoir)."

aim; and in order to keep our unworthiness ever before us, and thereby stimulate us to persevere in the narrow way, it has pleased Him to institute an order of men, personally as unworthy as the rest, to be His "ambassadors" on earth, and "ministers and stewards of His mysteries;" not as a caste separate from the laity, but as the authorized organs and representatives of the laity.

But there was another reason for the institution of the Christian Ministry besides that of teaching man that he was in his fallen condition incapable of offering acceptable service to Almighty God. There is in human nature an inborn tendency to selfishness. In order to counteract this tendency, to which even the best of men are more or less liable, God has made us necessary to each other. On the right hand and on the left, from the cradle to the grave, we need each other's help. Neither in health or sickness, in joy or sorrow, in temporal matters or in spiritual, can we afford to stand alone. Man is, of all creatures, the most helpless when he is born. The hour of his birth would be that of his death, were there no loving hands to tend him. And all through his mortal life, not only his happiness and well-being, but his very existence, depends upon this ministry of mutual service. So that our very selfishness is turned into an antidote against itself.

If we could go through this life to our eternal homes as isolated units, there would be nothing to check our innate selfishness. But human beings are no mere aggregate of independent units, each complete in itself and striving after its own solitary perfection. They are members of one family, "the whole family in heaven and on earth," and their mutual inter-dependence radiates from the centre of the family to the circumference of the race. Even the geographical arrangements of the globe, its varieties of climates and productions, are made to minister to the same end; and the dictates of enlightened selfishness are slowly teaching the nations of the earth that they have need of one another; that if one member suffer, the rest will in the long-run suffer with it; that exclusiveness is therefore a suicidal policy, the true secret of a nation's material prosperity lying, not in jealous hugging of its peculiar treasures, but in exchanging them for those of its neighbours.

Thus does God contrive, in the domain of things temporal, to make our very selfishness the instrument of its own destruction; and His method is the same in things spiritual. Through all the ordinances of the Christian Church He alone is the Giver and the Source of all spiritual blessings. Men, in whatever office, are but instruments and channels of His gifts. Indeed

it is very terrible to think how responsible we are for each other's weal or woe; how unceasing is our reciprocal influence, and how unconsciously it is for the most part exercised. It is probably no exaggeration to say that no two human beings ever came into close contact with each other, even for one short hour, without both of them being the better or the worse for it. Physiologists tell us that most of the diseases which afflict human nature are caused by living organisms which are imbibed into the body—organisms so minute as to be scarcely visible, yet so potent that they may breed disease and destroy life. And is it not true that each of us exhales a moral atmosphere charged with living germs which infect for good or ill the souls which come within the sphere of our influence? This is a power much more mysterious and awful than any claimed by the Christian Ministry; yet it is a power which each of us possesses in our measure and degree.

Consider in this connection the comparatively slow progress of Christianity in modern times compared with its rapid propagation during the first few centuries of its existence. Christianity has now been in the world for nearly nineteen centuries, yet the majority of mankind are still outside its pale. In the dawn of its career the Faith of Christ carried all before it. The

philosophy of Greece and the statecraft and legions of imperial Rome were alike powerless to arrest its progress. It penetrated like an epidemic into the hut of the savage and the palace of the Cæsars, and led captive Jew and Gentile, Greek and barbarian, bond and free. What has the Christian Church done in comparison with this during the last few centuries? On a fair balance of its gains and losses, must it not be sorrowfully owned that it has done little more than hold its own? And what is the explanation? Partly the indolence and selfishness of man, and the decay of that enthusiasm of humanity, radiant with Divine love, which extorted from the heathen in ancient days the tribute of reluctant admiration; and partly the humiliating fact that Christians have turned against each other the arms which they should have employed in extending the frontiers of their Master's kingdom. In other words, the purposes of God are so far baffled because He has entrusted the execution of them to the ministry of a fallible and selfish race. But can there be anything more mysterious? Why is God's will thus dependent on the will of man? Why has He not written His Name, His attributes, His message, in characters of light upon the sky, so that all men might see and understand? Because the perfection which comes from development through

moral discipline is not attainable in that way; and also because God's method of curing us of our selfishness is to make us necessary to each other.

Before concluding the subject of the Christian Ministry it is necessary to consider briefly the question of its transmission. Viewed historically, we may say confidently that Episcopal Ordination has from Apostolic times been the channel through which the Christian Ministry has come down to us. Dr. Lightfoot's vindication of the Ignatian Epistles, as well as his admission in his *Dissertation on the Ministry* (already quoted), to say nothing of a heap of cumulative evidence from other sources, has placed that assertion beyond the reach of reasonable controversy. Whether Dr. Lightfoot's explanation of the circumstances which led to the institution of Episcopacy is quite correct is altogether a different question, and does not touch the essence of the argument, which may be decided either way without prejudice to what is called the doctrine of Apostolical Succession. The objections to that doctrine which require notice are two: first, that the only true succession to the Christian Ministry is fitness for the office, ratified by an internal call; secondly, the impossibility of demonstrating the integrity of the chain of succession from Apostolic times.

The first objection need not detain us. It is based on a misconception, and confuses two things which are totally distinct: individual merit and official commission. To affirm that any man who shows fitness for the Christian Ministry needs no other qualification than his own inward conviction that he is called to the office, sealed by a call from a congregation, is as reasonable as it would be to argue that every good strategist is *ipso facto* a general, or every good financier *ipso facto* Chancellor of the Exchequer. Of course it would be much better if the men best fitted for the office were always appointed to discharge its duties, just as it would be desirable that the best men should always be appointed commanders-in-chief, ambassadors, and prime ministers. But to be qualified for an office is one thing: to be appointed to it is quite another. Men see this plainly enough in secular matters. How is it that so obvious a truth offends them when the sphere of its operations is spiritual? Is it because of man's natural reluctance to believe in the reality of processes of which the source and energy are invisible? But that is an objection which lies in the last analysis against almost all the processes of Nature. Moreover the various devices substituted for the historical ministry of the Church have not succeeded in always

providing ministers whose credentials have been attested by subsequent fitness. That objection may therefore be dismissed as irrelevant.

But it is said that the doctrine of Apostolical Succession is incapable of proof. That depends on the kind of proof which is demanded. If objectors insist on such proof as shall exclude all doubt, it must be admitted at once that no Bishop in Christendom can prove the validity of his succession. A reasoner, however, cannot take as much of an argument as he pleases; he is bound by the laws of logic to apply his principles all round, or to leave them alone; and if the argument against Apostolical Succession be applied all round, a good many other beliefs must be surrendered to the demands of an inexorable scepticism.

Let us then, first, consider the objection as it has been stated by men who believe in Christianity and in the inspiration of the Bible. "Forgeries of documents" may have been committed, says one of them, and "it will be felt how unequal is the chain to the weight which it sustains." Consequently the evidence "must be absolutely certain." Very good. But how will the Canon of Scripture stand such a test? If "absolute certainty" is necessary in such matters, how many of the books of either the Old or New

Testament can be traced back to their reputed authors? Not one. The Bible nowhere asserts its own inspiration; and although habit has accustomed us to regard it as one book, it is in fact a collection of writings marked by every variety of time and place, subject and authorship. They consist of Poems; Histories; Proverbs; Biographies; Songs and Psalms; Letters both on public and private affairs; a Code of Civil and Religious Laws; Prophecies. And the authors of these belonged to every class of human society, and were in some cases separated from each other by a thousand years. They were kings and warriors, priests and prophets, legislators, herdsmen, fishermen, tax-gatherers, physicians, and philosophers. Some of them did not even belong to the commonwealth of Israel; the author of the Book of Job, for example, and Balaam, whose discourses are included in the Sacred Canon. The several books, moreover, are nearly all anonymous, and the authorship of some of them is absolutely unknown. As far as internal evidence alone goes, the Bible is nothing more than a promiscuous collection of writings which the art of the binder has made into one book—a book, too, which did not exist as we have it for several generations after the death of the latest of its reputed authors. Then, again, on what principle were some

books admitted into the Canon and others rejected? The Books of Ecclesiasticus and Wisdom are certainly more beautiful as compositions than those of Ecclesiastes and Esther, and will to most minds seem more edifying. And as regards "forgeries of documents," the possibility of such a thing in support of Apostolical Succession falls to zero when compared with the facility which existed for forgery in the case of Holy Scripture. In short, every person who adopts the objection which I am criticising is logically bound to dispute the authenticity and genuineness of every book in the Bible unless he can trace out its genealogy, in print and manuscript, through all the copies up to the autographs of all the writers from Genesis to the Apocalypse. Indeed the objection strikes still deeper. The corner-stone of the whole edifice of historic Christianity is the Virgin Conception and Birth of its Founder. And what is the proof of that if pushed to its last logical link? The simple word of His Mother. Arguments that are double-edged had better be avoided, for they are apt to wound the hand that wields them. The Aaronic Priesthood stands on the same footing as the succession of the Christian ministry, except that its evidence is incomparably weaker. Like Christianity itself, each link in the chain rests on the simple word of a woman, who, in

case of fraud, had the strongest motive for deception. The validity of the priesthood in the Jewish Church was based on legitimate descent from Aaron, of which there could not be in any single case an indisputable proof.

The truth is, we must in all such cases fall back on moral evidence and on God's overruling providence. He is not tied to His ordinances, and when the "ministers and stewards of His mysteries" have faithfully done their part, the Founder of the Church can Himself make good any flaw that may arise through accident or ignorance. But in order to invalidate the evidence it is not enough to point to the possibility of "forged documents" and the like; the objector must make out a case, for the burden of proof rests on him. Indeed, the usual objections against the valid succession of the Christian Ministry tell with much more effect, as I have already pointed out, against the devolution of property; nay, more: they would shake the foundations of physical science, which in some of its ultimate truths reposes on faith rather than on demonstration. Where is the evidence for belief in an external world? Scientifically there is none. Destroy man's nerves of sensation—vision, hearing, touch—and all evidence vanishes. Again, it is an axiom of physical science that the quantity of

force in the universe is fixed and definite. This belief, says Mr. Herbert Spencer, is the basis of all science, and the laws of Nature are corollaries of it. Without it no scientific conclusion could be verified; yet it is itself incapable of verification. Equally so is the scientific axiom that matter exists under the form of the co-existent forces of attraction and repulsion. "We cannot," says Mr. Herbert Spencer, "truly represent one ultimate unit of matter as drawing one unit of matter while resisting it. Nevertheless the belief is one we are compelled to entertain." On the other hand, the possibility of a break in the succession of the Christian Ministry is, by the doctrine of chances, so small as almost to reach the vanishing point. A distinguished living writer has shown that it is mathematically equivalent to one against many billions. Three Bishops are required to take part in every Episcopal Consecration, which multiplies indefinitely the improbability of fraud or accident. It is so extremely improbable that three consecrators should all lack valid consecration, that the objector must undertake to prove it in particulars before he can claim a hearing. And even if he could prove it in any one case, the defect would not outlive the bishops ordained by the three spurious consecrators. It could not be perpetuated.

But how does such a doctrine affect the position of non-Episcopal Communions? Let me say at once that I have no sort of sympathy with accusations of "schism" and "hostility to the Church" made by Churchmen against Nonconformists. To me it seems absurd to charge the sin of schism against English Nonconformists, considering their history in all its bearings. As a Churchman I am grateful to them for having done so much for Christianity during periods of apathy and supineness on the part of the Church of England. And the more of the privileges of the Church of England they are allowed to share, so long as no essential principle is sacrificed on either side, the more do I rejoice. Nor do I feel any resentment against Nonconformist hostility to the Church. The existence of Nonconformity implies, of course, antagonism to the Established religion, and Churchmen have no right to blame Nonconformists for being consistent and loyal to their own principles. The Christian who does not believe in the superiority of his own communion has no excuse for separation. Our Lord's dying prayer was that all Christians might be one, not in heart and spirit merely, but in outward appearance as well. It was for a visible unity He prayed, a unity which should appeal to the world. "Neither pray I for these [His immediate disciples]

alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me." It is therefore an imperative Christian duty to allow nothing that is not absolutely essential, nothing that does not belong to the original deposit of Christian truth, or is not a necessary corollary from it, to stand in the way of Christian unity. The divisions of Christendom are doubtless the greatest of all hindrances to the spread of Christianity. I am sure that Nonconformists are firmly convinced in their own minds that their separation from the Church is justified by the claims of truth. And so long as they hold that opinion they are bound in honesty to oppose the Church and strive to bring it over to their own way of thinking.

But what I concede to the Nonconformist I claim for the Churchman. I am convinced on historical grounds that Episcopacy is the original form of Church government. I cannot find in the records of primitive Christianity a trace of non-episcopal Churchmanship. At the first Œcumenical Council, representing the Church scattered throughout the world, we find the Church under the government of Bishops; and although some questions bearing on the

constitution of the Church came under discussion, there was not a whisper of complaint that a revolution had silently taken place—namely, the substitution of Episcopacy for Presbyterianism or any other form of ecclesiastical polity. Surely that is a conclusive proof that Episcopacy was down to that time the universally recognized form of the Christian Ministry. The Council of Nícæa had evidently never heard either of Presbyterianism, Congregationalism, or Papalism.[1]

[1] A most remarkable admission lies before me of the sheer impossibility of reconciling Papalism with the historical evidence furnished by the Œcumenical Councils of undivided Christendom. The admission is made in a learned volume, *De Hebræorum et Christianorum Sacra Monarchia et de Infallibili in Utraque Magisterio*, printed at Rome in 1875, "ex Typographia Vaticana," and dedicated to Pius the Ninth. The author, Aloisius Vincenzi, is a Roman Prelate and Professor of Hebrew. This learned and candid Professor, after surveying the history of the first five centuries of Christianity, finds the canons of the ancient Councils absolutely irreconcilable with the Papal theory. What is to be done? The Papacy cannot be surrendered, for that is with Vincenzi a primary article of faith. The only alternative is to throw overboard as forgeries the canons of the early Councils, and our author adopts that alternative. Here is the conclusion of his elaborate argument:—

"Demum, quidquid putandum sit de origine et auctoritate præfatorum innumerorum Canonun, nullus tamen mihi unquam suadebit, Apostolos, Patres Nicænos, Constantinopolitanos, Africanos, Chalcedonenses, et quidem orthodoxos, quandoque tales sancivisse Canones; in quibus Petri et successorum imminuitur et deletur primatus; ac una Pontificatus Romani expugnatur jurisdictio supra Ecclesiæ Catholicæ episcopatum."

But what is to be said of St. Paul's withstanding Peter "because he was to be blamed," and of the co-ordinate authority given to St.

Surely there can be no lack of charity in holding to what one believes to be the truth. But the Churchman who believes that he possesses a larger measure of the truth than those who have separated themselves from the original constitution of the Christian Church is not entitled on that acount to look down upon them or to consider them less near to God than himself. On the contrary, he is bound to believe that a Dissenter who is morally on the same plane as himself is relatively and in the sight of God on a higher level, because his privileges are fewer. Our Lord warned the self-righteous Pharisees of His day that many should come from the east and west and sit down with Abraham in the kingdom of heaven, while the children of the kingdom, who had neglected or abused their privileges, would be cast out. So now the Nonconformist who makes the most of his opportunities and walks according to his lights is a better Christian than the Churchman who scornfully looks down upon him and lives a meaner life. And, after all, we must not forget that every baptized

Peter and St. Paul in several of St. Paul's Epistles? Here too Vincenzi's candour is admirable. He frankly admits that the passages in question cannot be harmonized with Papal supremacy and infallibility. So he devotes sixty-six large quarto pages to prove that it was not Peter the Apostle to whom reference is made, but a less-known namesake. See pp. 291–298, 305–371.

Christian, whether he be a Nonconformist or not, is a member of the Church. The Nonconformists of our day have inherited their position, and it is not ours to sit in judgment upon them. We are bound to adhere to what we believe to be the truth. The rest we must leave to Him Who "judgeth righteously." Let us remember that some of the greatest prophets who illumined the history of the Jewish Church belonged to the kingdom of Israel with its schismatical worship and irregular priesthood. That Churchman must indeed be blind, and worse than blind, who fails to recognize the illustrious services that English Nonconformity and Scotch Presbyterianism have rendered to the cause of Christianity both at home and abroad. It is a duty to acknowledge all that while honestly contending for our own principles.

One of the stock arguments against the Church of England on the part of our Roman brethren is that she does not claim perfection; that she acknowledges the existence of corruptions, heterodoxies, divisions, while claiming nevertheless to be an integral portion of the Church of Christ. This admission is authoritatively declared to be fatal to the claim, since the Catholic Church must necessarily be incorrupt and irreformable. A writer in the *Dublin Review* of July, 1875, propounds this view in an elaborate

article. Starting from an assertion by Cardinal Manning—namely, that "a 'reformed Church is necessarily a human one,' which neither comes from God nor leads to Him,"—the writer proceeds to draw a strict analogy between the history of the physical universe and that of the Church. In the former he finds "no crack nor flaw. It is still as perfect as when it came from the Creator's hand." Disorder and confusion are "absolutely excluded. And therefore it follows" that if God "had made a Church liable to corruption and division, as Anglicans say, He would have contradicted Himself, denied His own nature, and cancelled the work of Redemption. He would have shown less care for His elect than for the humblest flower which blooms securely in the cleft of the rock, or the meanest insect which finds a safe home in a leaf shaken by the wind." In short, absolute perfection, without "crack or flaw," is declared to mark the handiwork of God alike in the realms of Nature and of Grace. Such is the astounding thesis which is sustained in the leading organ of the Roman Church in the country. Let us briefly examine it.

Now, of course, every Christian must believe that perfection must characterize the works of Him Whose wisdom, and power, and love are all infinite. But

what do we mean by 'perfection'? The Dublin Reviewer means that everything issues from the Creator's hands without "crack or flaw," and therefore incapable for evermore of reformation or improvement. But this is certainly not the kind of perfection which we behold either in the history of the world or of the Church. In each there is perfection, but it is perfection after a long effort marked by the scars of many a "crack and flaw." This planet which we inhabit, and of which we know most, was not projected into space by the fiat of the Almighty in the condition in which we now see it. There was a time when it was whirling through space as a globe of fire, unfit for any known form of life. And what is its history since it became habitable? Is it not the history of unceasing progress, strewn all round with the wrecks of what at the time must have seemed fruitless efforts? We, who look back upon them, may see that the efforts were not fruitless, and that each seeming failure had its place and purpose in one grand design. But if we fix our gaze on the present alone, ignoring alike the lessons of the past and the premonitions of the future, we shall find ourselves obliged to exclaim with Dr. Newman: "I look into this living busy world and see no reflection of its Creator;"[1] or to

[1] *Apologia*, p. 377.

take refuge with Mr. Mill in the conclusion, that the anomalies of the moral and physical world are inexplicable except on the Manichean hypothesis. The perfection, therefore, of which we have experience in the moral and physical world is a development from rude beginnings, through "cracks and flaws," to a crowning result. This is what we behold everywhere. The flower does not always "bloom securely in the cleft of the rock," nor does the insect invariably "find a safe home in a leaf shaken by the wind." The flowers that bloom are but a small proportion of the seeds which perish, and the frost of a single hour may smite the smiling blossom with premature decay. Yet neither seed nor blossom perishes in vain; in its death as in its life each fulfils its purpose in the economy of Nature. Seeming failure, but real success: this is the characteristic of God's work in the physical creation, and we should therefore naturally expect to find His spiritual creation marked by the same characteristic. Nor are our anticipations belied by facts. Look at the Jewish Church. The Dublin Reviewer will hardly deny that the polity prescribed to Moses in the Mount of God was a divine creation; and he knows the glowing prophecies of which the Jewish Church was the subject. Spotlessness, unity, permanence, indefectibility, were among the attributes

ascribed to her in psalm and prophecy. Yet the Jewish Church was defiled by idolatry, rent by schism, and carried into captivity; and some of the greatest Prophets and of the most remarkable miracles, which illustrated her chequered history, belong to the Ten Tribes which worshipped the golden calves of Jeroboam.

The history of the Christian Church offers an exact parallel. Like her Jewish prototype, she is the heir of magnificent promises; but the time of fulfilment is not yet. Even in the Apostolic age, we read of the "divisions" and "heresies," which disturbed her peace and mingled the tares of error with the wheat of Divine truth; and we have it on the word of her Founder that this mingling of the wheat and tares must go on till the harvest. Certainly it has been so hitherto, though short-sighted men and parties have from time to time made vain attempts to uproot the tares, and in so doing have too often "rooted up the wheat also."

As English Church-people, therefore, we need not be discouraged by any shortcomings, scandals, anomalies in faith or morals which we may see in the Church. Such things are on the general lines of God's providence all along the history of our planet and its inhabitants. They should stimulate us to

greater efforts as soldiers of Christ and citizens of His Kingdom; but they afford no presumption, still less do they afford proof, that a Church in which they are visible is a mere human institution, not a Divine creation. The presumption is entirely the other way.

XII.

"THE LIFE OF THE WORLD TO COME."

LIFE ETERNAL CONTRASTED

"I LOOK for the Resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come." So ends the Nicene Creed. What is "the life of the world to come"? The Apostles' Creed calls it "the life everlasting." Our Lord always speaks of it as "life eternal," which is better than "everlasting." The idea we get from "everlasting" is duration without end. The thought of eternity lifts our minds altogether out of the sphere of time. Eternity has no relation to time. It has no succession of moments; no future; therefore no uncertainty: it is an ever-enjoyable present; the life of Almighty God. What a contrast to our life on earth! That is brief at the best. The youngest and strongest among us can with certainty name a day in the near future and say, "When that day arrives I shall not be here. The sun will rise and set, but my eyes will not behold it. Men will go about their business and pleasures, but I shall no longer be among them. They

will assemble in the House of God for prayer and adoration, but my voice will no more mingle with theirs; I shall then be partaker, for good or ill, of a life that is endless."

And not only is the present life short at the best; it is most uncertain while it lasts. We can foretell its end within a given period, but not the precise date of its end. It hangs on a thread which may be snapped any moment. The only thing certain about it is that it will soon cease. And not only so, but it is most imperfect while it lasts. Were its duration prolonged and its tenure secured to us, it would still be unsatisfying. Our best intentions are liable to be misunderstood, our most cherished plans are exposed to failure, our deepest desires often miss their aim. And, to crown all, our real self, our immortal personality, is imprisoned in a material organism which fetters its inherent powers, and is subject to innumerable calamities and incessant decay. So that a large part of this life is wasted in warding off the various ills that flesh is heir to, and in recruiting mind and body after the exhaustion that daily ensues on the exercise of their powers.

How different is the life eternal! It has no end, and is marred by no uncertainty. No scheme can there miscarry for lack of time or untoward circumstances.

And there is no waste of energy or exhaustion from the exercise of faculties. We are told indeed that those who shall be privileged to enjoy the eternal life "rest from their labours." Yes, from their labours. But we also read that "they rest not day and night." In other words, work will no longer be a labour, but a delight. There will be unceasing energy, unwearied activity of mind and body; new pleasures and wonders opening out new faculties, which will ever expand from constant use guided by Supreme Wisdom.

Such is the life for which the Nicene Creed bids us look. And the necessary condition of enjoying it, our Lord tells us, is knowledge of the true God: "And this is life eternal, that they should know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent." There is no ambiguity here. If we are to believe our Lord, knowledge of Divine truth, of "the only true God" and of the Incarnation, are necessary for the enjoyment of eternal life. This, I fear, is not the popular view. What does it matter, we often hear it asked, what a man believes in matters of religion if he lives a good moral life? Pope has given terse expression to that opinion in the well-known lines:—

> "For forms of government let fools contest;
> Whate'er is best administered is best.
> For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight;
> His can't be wrong whose life is in the right."

The theology of this verse is on a par with its politics. The form of government which is "best administered" is by no means necessarily "best." The best form of government is that which trains its subjects to govern themselves, and which thus combines the *maximum* of individual liberty with the *minimum* of governmental control. The true end of government is the good of the governed, and the form of government which secures this is undoubtedly the best. But the mere machinery of government may be more efficient under the most grinding despotism than under the most constitutional rule. A government which is under popular control will be slower in its action, and more vacillating in its policy; yet in the long-run its policy will be wiser and its administration better than those of a despotism or an oligarchy. Salutary reforms in policy and administration, as the history of our own country shows (*e.g.* the reform of our criminal code), come from below. This is not because the rulers and the educated and well-to-do classes are less humane than the masses, or more indifferent to the common weal, but because their privileged position debars them from a practical knowledge of the evils to be remedied.[1] How nobly

[1] Aristotle's wonderfully practical mind anticipated in this, as in so many other matters, one of the fundamental experiences of

is the true idea of government expressed in the Te Deum: "Govern them, *and lift them up for ever.*" That is the Divine method of government. Rulers die, governments perish, empires pass away; but "the Lord sitteth above the waterfloods, and the Lord remaineth a King for ever;" never weary, never baffled, never impatient, for He can afford to bide His time, since nothing can escape Him, having an eternity to work in. And His work is unceasingly directed to one end—the lifting up of the creature towards Himself. Governments fail or prosper in the long-run in the degree in which they adopt or repudiate His method.

The last half of the verse is still more shallow and sophistical, for it begs the question in debate by assuming that man's life can be "in the right" while his creed is in the wrong. But can it? Does not the history of mankind prove the contrary? Universal

popular government. I may refer, *inter alia*, to the following passage in his *Politics* (Bk. iii. ch. 11):—"The opinion that the multitude should rule (*κύριον*), rather than the choice few (*τοὺς ἀρίστους μὲν ὀλίγους*), is not free from a certain degree of difficulty; but it admits of explanation, and contains an element of truth. For the many, though none of them excel individually, when they combine are likely to be better than the few best viewed in the lump. For each individual among the many has a share of virtue and practical wisdom, and when they meet together the multitude are like one man, who has many feet, and hands, and senses."

experience shows that man becomes of necessity assimilated to the object of his homage. If that object be pure and noble, it will generate a pure and noble character in the worshipper; if impure and base, the character moulded by it will also be impure and base. What is the history of Paganism but one long and melancholy illustration of this truth?—

> "Gods partial, changeful, passionate, unjust,
> Whose attributes were rage, revenge, or lust."

Such is Pope's own description of the deities of heathen mythology, and it is a proof of his shallow philosophy that he could imagine that man's life could possibly be in the right while it succumbed to the demoralizing influences of such "modes of faith" as these. No fact in history is more certain than that the character of a people is moulded by their faith. Look at Mohamedanism. It is the religion of a large variety of races, differing from each other in climate, language, history, and in mental and bodily characteristics. Yet one type of moral character pervades them all. They are, in the mass, impure, cruel, arrogant, corrupt, unprogressive—characteristics which are all found in the Being whom they adore as God. The most prominent attribute in the God of Islam is stern, relentless, fateful power. He has no tenderness. To predicate fatherhood of him, or attribute to him any

other of the affections of human relationship, is rank blasphemy according to the Koran. And his rule is not founded on righteousness, but on favouritism. The Koran represents Mohamed as a special favourite whom Allah humours as an Oriental despot would be likely to humour a favourite Minister. Does the Prophet wish to indulge some foul lust? or gratify some cruel passion? or perpetrate some gross treachery? In each case he receives without delay a divine revelation to sanction the sin, and thereby transmute it into a virtue. And these sanctions of iniquity, with many others, are in Sacred Law, and must continue to shape the characters of all for whom the Koran is the rule of faith and practice.

To those who have not made a serious study of the literature of Islam, or who have no experimental knowledge of the practical working of the system in lands where it rules supreme, this will seem a too severe judgment. I say "in lands where it rules supreme," because some worthy persons judge Islam by their knowledge of it where it does *not* rule supreme, as in India. Every one who has mastered the literature of the subject, or who has studied the system in purely Mohamedan countries, agrees with my estimate of it.[1] One or two authoritative names

[1] I have given ample evidence of this in an article in the *Contemporary Review*, May, 1883, on *Islam and Civilization*.

may suffice as specimens. In intellect, scholarship, impartiality, and practical knowledge of Mohamedanism in all parts of the world, no more authoritative name can be quoted than the late Mr. Gifford Palgrave's. I will, therefore, make two or three quotations from him. "The God of Islam," says Mr. Palgrave, "is 'a Pantheism of Force,' 'the autocratic will of the one Great Agent'—a tyrant whose sole rule of conduct is 'sic volo, sic jubeo; stat pro ratione voluntas.'" Mr. Palgrave then goes on to quote a tradition which, he says, expresses the genuine belief of Muslims:—

"When God—so runs the tradition—I had better said the blasphemy—resolved to create the human race He took into His hands a mass of earth, the same whence all mankind were to be formed, and in which they, after a manner, pre-existed; and, having then divided the clod into two equal portions, He threw the one half into hell, saying, 'These to eternal fire, and I care not;' and projected the other half into heaven, adding, 'And these to Paradise; and I care not.'"

I think we shall all agree in Mr. Palgrave's criticism:—

"Commentary would here be superfluous. But in this we have before us the adequate idea of predestination, or, to give it a truer name, pre-damnation,

held and taught in the school of the Koran. Paradise and hell are at once totally independent of love and hatred on the part of the Deity, and of merits and demerits, of good or evil conduct, on the part of the creature; and in the corresponding theory rightly so, since the very actions which we call good or ill deserving, right or wrong, wicked or virtuous, are in their essence all one and of one, and accordingly merit neither praise nor blame, punishment nor recompense, except and simply after the arbitrary value which the all-regulating will of the Great Despot may choose to assign or impute to them. In a word, He burns one individual through all eternity, amid red-hot chains and seas of molten fire; and seats another in the plenary enjoyment of an everlasting brothel, between forty celestial concubines; just and equally for His own good pleasure and because He wills it."[1]

Thus you see that the words God, paradise, retribution, future judgment, "equality of all true believers before God," imply in the creed of Islam ideas radically different from those conveyed by the same words in Christianity and Judaism. The Allah of Islam is an immoral, irresistible, personal Force; and inasmuch as the worshipper becomes in character assimi-

[1] *Narrative of a Year's Journey through Central and Eastern Arabia*, i. 365, 367.

lated to the object of his worship, it is no wonder that the devotees of such a deity have exhibited throughout their long history the characteristics which they adore —namely, destructive force and sensual indulgence. And this malign influence of the Islamic conception of deity is, of course, intensified by the character of the Muslim's prophet and archetype of human perfection.

Some of the admirers of Islam point to isolated passages in the Koran which seem to inculcate nobler views than those which I have attributed to the system. I refer such to the pertinent answer of Mr. Palgrave :—

" My readers will understand that in the plan above traced of the Mohammedan theory as embodied in the Koran, I have only intended to convey the leading idea, to pourtray the leading lineaments, to analyze the ultimate and essential constituents, without taking into account healthier and unhomogeneous admixtures and anomalous touches of better grace. Such undoubtedly exist in the Koran itself, and others are recorded by credible tradition; happy inconsistencies where the Prophet degenerated upwards into a man, and the Koran forgot itself for a moment to become almost reasonable and human. But these are, after all, heteroclite exceptions, and can thus only be ad-

duced in opposition to the great scheme of the work and its writer, when one feeble line shall prove Shakespeare no poet, or one devout phrase indict Voltaire of Christianity." [1]

There are those, however, who think that this influence on conduct and character may be avoided by the expedient of having no distinct faith at all. Let us by all means, they say, admire the moral sentiments of the Gospel and practise its moral precepts; but do not let us trouble ourselves about its doctrines. Vain thought! The morality of Christianity is inseparable from its doctrines, and could not long survive their general decay. Doubtless it would survive for some time. The atmosphere of Christendom has been for centuries so charged with Christian

[1] *Ibid.*, 369. Also by the same author, *Ulysses; or, Scenes and Studies in Many Lands*, p. 155. See also Doughty's *Arabia Deserta*, i. 101, 149, 178, 212, 265, 303, 340, 502; ii. 360, 361. Mr. Doughty spent a year among the Arabs of the Desert, speaking their language and living their life, and anything more repulsive than the picture which he gives of their impurity, untruthfulness, and treachery, it is impossible to imagine. And he attributes it all to their religion. "'The worshipper models himself on what he worships,' is an Arab proverb," says Mr. Palgrave in his book on Arabia (i. 369, 370), "no less true in religion than in love," and he adds that "history confirms the axiom" in the case of Mohamedanism. See also Mr. Thomson's *Travels in the Atlas and Southern Morocco*. Mr. Thomson's testimony (and he is a very competent witness) agrees with that of Mr. Palgrave and Mr. Doughty. Islam has ever been a curse to every land that it has conquered.

ideas and Christian principles that no one can get rid of the influence of Christianity by simply rejecting its creed. And, therefore, no one brought up in a Christian land can say how he would conduct himself if he could rid himself of the contagion of Christianity. But he cannot rid himself of it. Nor can even a whole nation do so at once by a universal apostasy—I mean a nation that has been Christian for centuries. The modification of character inherited from generations of Christian ancestors, teachers, and legislators cannot be undone by an act of arbitrary choice. An Englishman is said to carry with him to Northern Russia an amount of animal heat which it takes three years to reduce to the normal temperature of the natives. In the same way, the Christian morals of a people would be sure to survive for some time the ruin of their faith. But they would not survive very long. And the reason is plain. Moral character is rooted in the affections rather than in the intellect, and the affections *will* cling to some object. They cannot live in a vacuum. And as they will inevitably be influenced and moulded by the object to which they attach themselves, the nature and character of that object become a matter of vital importance. But an inquiry into the nature and character of the object of worship implies theology. Thus we see how idle is

the attempt to divorce morality from dogma. Morality separated from dogma will gradually, but as certainly, expire as a piece of coal taken out of the fire and left alone with its borrowed heat. Let me cite an unsuspected witness in support of that conclusion. In a speech delivered in the French Academy seven years ago, on the occasion of the admission of M. Cherbuliez, M. Rénan described the gradual conversion of the new Academician's father from faith to scepticism; and then went on to explain how much the son still benefited by the faith in which the father had once believed :—

"It is often to these formulas" (says Rénan pensively) "that we unwittingly owe the remains of all virtue which we possesss. In our generation we live on a shadow, on the perfume of a vase which once was full and now is empty. After us men will have to live on the shadow of a shadow; and I often fear on something lighter still."

In brief, then, we may say that bad Christians and good Mohamedans are disloyal to their respective creeds. In each case the religion moulds the characters of its adherents. The eternal life on which the Muslim's imagination is fed and his character moulded is an endless round of indolent self-indulgence. The eternal life promised by Christ to His

followers is one of total unselfishness and unwearying activity. And the Founder of each religion practised what he preached. The Mohamedan degenerates morally and intellectually the more closely he imitates the character of his Prophet, as Mecca abundantly proves. The Christian, on the other hand is elevated in every faculty of his nature in the degree in which he imitates his Master's character as unfolded in the Gospel narrative. We have thus two radically opposed types of character generated by different "modes of faith." So much for the shallow sophistry which would persuade us that a man's creed has no bearing on his conduct and character; that his "life" can be "in the right" though his creed be wrong. "This is life eternal, that they should know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent." In these few words we have the rationale of the Christian creed. Practical knowledge of the true God, as revealed in His Son, has the most vital bearing on human conduct, and consequently on man's eternal life.

In this connection it may be useful to offer some observations on one of the creeds of the Church, which is, I think, greatly misunderstood; I mean the Athanasian Creed.

In the first place, then, let us remember that the

Athanasian Creed is intended for Christians only. No others are affected by it in any way. It is an exposition, in somewhat technical language, of the Christian Faith as it affects Christians, and none but Christians. Just as Proclamations to the citizens of Great Britain are not intended for foreigners, though resident amongst us, so the Athanasian Creed is not addressed to any who are not Christians. It passes no judgment and expresses no opinion on the future condition of the professors of other religions.

In the next place, the Athanasian Creed does not say that even Christians who do not hold the Catholic Faith cannot be saved. This is evident from the Latin form of the Creed, which is the authoritative form. The correct translation of the Latin words is: "Whosoever wishes to be safe, before all things it is is necessary that he hold the Catholic Faith." God has revealed one certain way of salvation on which, if a man walk, he must be safe, and cannot fail to reach his home. Many will doubtless reach home by other ways. God made a special revelation to the Jews of old; yet our Lord told them that many would come from beyond the frontiers of Israel and sit down in the kingdom of heaven with the Father of the Faithful, while many of "the children of the kingdom" should be "cast out." The Jew was safe while

he walked along the road which had been revealed to him and moulded himself on the character of the God Whom he worshipped. The heathen were not safe; they were in danger of moral ruin from the contaminating influences of the gods whom they adored. So now the Christian who fashions his character on that of God as revealed in Jesus Christ is safe whatever his condition on earth may chance to be. But he cannot thus fashion his character unless he has a true conception of Almighty God as revealed in the Incarnation.

I am tempted to quote, in illustration of this fact, the following striking passage from Mr. Hutton's powerful essay on *The Incarnation and Principles of Evidence*:—"If Christ is the Eternal Son of God, God is indeed and in essence a Father; the social nature, the spring of love, is of the very essence of the Eternal being; the communication of His life, the reciprocation of His affection, dates from beyond time—belongs, in other words, to the very being of God. Now some persons think that such a certainty, even when attained, has very little to do with human life. 'What does it matter,' they say, 'what the absolute nature of God is, if we know what He is *to us;* how can it concern us to know what He was before our race existed, if we know what He is to

all His creatures now?' These questions seem plausible, but I believe they point to a very deep error. I can answer for myself that the Unitarian conviction that God is—*as* God and in His eternal essence—a single and, so to say, solitary personality, influenced my imagination and the whole colour of my faith most profoundly. Such a conviction, thoroughly realized, renders it impossible to identify any of the social attributes with His real *essence*—renders it difficult not to regard power as the true root of all other Divine life. If we are to believe that *the Father* was from all time, we must believe that He was *as* a Father—that is, that love was actual in Him as well as potential; that the communication of life and thought and fulness of joy was of the inmost nature of God, and never began to be if God never began to be.

"For my own part, I am sure that our belief, whatever it may be, about the 'absolute' nature of God, influences far more than any one supposes our practical thoughts about the actual relation of God to us. Unitarians eagerly deny, I once eagerly denied, that God is to them a solitary Omnipotence. Nor is He. But I am sure that the conception of a single eternal will as originating, and infinitely antecedent to, all acts of love or spiritual communion

with any other, affects vitally the temper of faith. The throne of heaven is to them a lonely one. The solitude of the eternities weighs upon their imaginations. *Social* are necessarily postponed to *individual* attributes; for they date from a later origin—from creation,—while power and thought are eternal. Necessarily, therefore, God, though spoken of and worshipped as a Father to us, is conceived *primarily* as imagining and creating; secondarily only, as loving and inspiring. But any Being whose thoughts and resolves are conceived as in any sense deeper and more personal than His affections, is necessarily regarded rather as benignant and compassionate than as affording the type of that deepest kind of love which is co-ordinate with life; in short, rather as a beneficence whose love springs out of power and reason, than as One whose power and reason are grounded in love. I am sure that this notion of God as the Absolute Cause does tincture deeply even the highest form of Unitarian faith, and I cannot see how it could be otherwise. If our prayers are addressed to One whose eternity we habitually image as unshared, we necessarily for the time image the Father the Omniscient and Omnipotent Genius of the universe. If, on the other hand, we pray to One who has revealed His own eternity through the

Eternal Son; if, in the spirit of the liturgies, Catholic and Protestant, we alternate our prayers to the eternal originating love, and to that filial love in which it has been eternally mirrored, turning from the 'Father of heaven' to the 'Son, Redeemer of the world,' and back again to Him in whom that Son for ever rests—then we keep a God essentially *Social* before our hearts and minds, and fill our imagination with no solitary grandeur." [1]

Is there not good reason, therefore, for the declaration of the Athanasian Creed, that "whosoever wishes to be safe, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic Faith"? But why *before all things?* Would it not be more reasonable to say that before all things it is necessary that a man should live a good moral life? I think I have already answered that question by showing that man's conduct is influenced by his belief; that as his faith is, so is his character; that his nature feeds upon and becomes assimilated to that of the deity whom he adores. It is not easy to realize this in a Christian land, the very atmosphere of which is charged with Christian influences, so that men who disown the Christian Faith are nevertheless leavened by it unconsciously, and think and act differently from what they would

[1] *Essays, Theological and Literary*, ii. 246–248.

otherwise have done. Man cannot do without religion of some sort, and considering the influence of religion on conduct, it is of primary importance that a man should start with a true religious belief. Hence the declaration of the Athanasian Creed, that "before all things it is necessary that whosoever wishes to be safe should hold the Catholic Faith."

But what shall we say of the next verse? "Which Faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly." "Perish everlastingly:" what does that mean? In a general way, any life whatever may be said to "perish everlastingly" which comes everlastingly short of the end of its existence. Every form of created life enfolds in its rudimentary germ an ideal towards which it should consciously or unconsciously aspire. The ideal of a corn-seed is to reproduce itself in stalk and grain by the law of self-sacrifice; therein lies its perfection. But if it remain unfruitful it may be said to perish everlastingly, because it has missed the end of its existence. The perfection of a tree lies in its reaching the height and girth and stately shape of which it is potentially capable. I know a forest by the sea where all the trees are dwarfed and misshapen. They had been exposed during their period of growth to the withering winds of an eastern ocean, and were

thus arrested and perverted in their development. They had passed their period of probation and taken their final shape, and no power could henceforth change their condition. The lightning might blast, the tempest might break or root them up; but no force of man or nature could ever mend them. They had "perished everlastingly."

Have we not here a parable of human life? Man's character has, like a tree, its period of growth, and tends to a state of unchanging fixity. It is as true of him as of the trees of the forest that the influences of a comparatively short period may determine the condition of a period indefinitely long. Exposure to a demoralizing set of influences for a given time may fix the character so irrevocably in a wrong groove that it is, in the language of Holy Scripture, "impossible to renew it again unto repentance." On the other hand, perseverance in the right way will, in due course, so bias the will Godward that it can no longer yield to the influence of evil. This self-determined choice of good is in truth the highest form of freedom. True moral liberty is the habitual free choice of what is right; and for a moral being everlasting perdition means such an incorrigible paralysis of the will and perversion of the affections as shall make recovery hopeless. Even the Pagan

Aristotle, committed to no theory of eschatology, was forced by his profound analysis of human nature to the conclusion that habitual wrong-doing must result in a character of "incorrigible" depravity.[1] And have we not here an explanation of the "great gulf fixed" between Dives and Lazarus, which those on either side could not pass? It was a moral gulf. Lazarus could not alleviate the misery of the wretched voluptuary who had by self-indulgence destroyed his capacity for enjoying the "good things" which were now the heritage of the whilom beggar. How terribly significant is Abraham's answer to the piteous appeal! "Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst *thy* good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented." "Receivest *thy* good things." The "purple and fine linen" and sumptuous fare were the only things which Dives had recognized as good. He had made the pleasures of the senses his all-in-all; had woven them into the woof and texture of his character, so that they had become part of him; they were *his* good things. In other words, he had by his selfishness destroyed his taste for heavenly things, and had created appetites which could no longer be gratified, a thirst which could not be quenched. Lazarus could do nothing for him;

[1] *Ethics*, bk. ii. c. 11, § 7.

could offer him no relief, for there was no anodyne in Paradise to appease the torture of sensual appetites clamouring for food which was no longer attainable. There was "a great gulf fixed" which could not be passed; but it was fixed and made impassable by the Rich Man himself, through the ruin of a constitution which could no longer enjoy the good things of eternity. The Beggar's misery on earth is not called *his* "evil things," but simply "evil things." It was no part of himself; it was only a character assigned to him on the stage of this world's theatre, and which he left behind him when he passed behind the scenes. Judas Iscariot fell, we are told, "that he might go to his own place;"[1] that is to say, he was drawn, like Dives, by the force of an irresistible attraction to the sphere of being to which he had adapted his nature. "The happiness which good men shall partake is not distinct from their Godlike nature. Happiness and holiness are but two several notions of one thing. Hell is rather a nature than a place, and heaven cannot be so well defined by anything without as by something within us."[2] Channing has drawn a vivid

[1] Acts i. 25.

[2] *On the Happiness and Holiness of True Religion*, in John Smith's (the Cambridge Platonist's) *Select Discourses*. I quote from the edition of 1637, which is the best.

picture of the way in which each of us may thus create our own several hells.

"In the present state,"[1] he says, "we find that the mind has an immense power over the body, and, when diseased, often communicates disease to its sympathizing companion. I believe that in the future state the mind will have this power of conforming its outward frame to itself incomparably more than here. We must never forget that, in that world, mind or character is to exert an all-powerful sway; and accordingly it is rational to believe that the corrupt and deformed mind which wants moral goodness, or a spirit of concord with God and with the Universe, will create for itself as its fit dwelling a deformed body, which will also want concord or harmony with all things around it. Suppose this to exist, and the whole creation which now amuses may become an instrument of suffering, fixing the soul with a more harrowing consciousness on itself. You know that even now, in consequence of certain derangements of the nervous system, the beautiful light gives acute pain, and sounds which once delighted us become shrill and distressing. How often this excessive irritableness of the body has its origin in moral disorders perhaps few of us suspect.

[1] Works, vol. iv. pp. 164–166.

I apprehend, indeed, that we should be all amazed were we to learn to what extent the body is continually incapacitated for enjoyment, and made susceptible of suffering, by the sins of the heart and life. That delicate part of our organization, on which sensibility pain and pleasure depend, is, I believe, peculiarly alive to the touch of moral evil. How easily, then, may the mind hereafter frame the future body according to itself, so that, in proportion to its vice, it will receive through its organs and senses impressions of gloom which it will feel to be the natural productions of its own depravity, and which will in this way give a terrible energy to conscience! For myself, I see no need of a local hell for the sinner after death. When I reflect how, in the present world, a guilty mind has power to deform the countenance, to undermine health, to poison pleasure, to darken the fairest scenes of nature, to turn prosperity into a curse, I can easily understand how, in the world to come, sin, working without obstruction according to its own nature, should spread the gloom of a dungeon over the whole creation, wherever it goes, should turn the universe into a hell."

This is a terrible commentary on St. Paul's Resurrection doctrine: "To every seed his own body."

Every seed has its own specific life, which builds around it an outward organization suited to its peculiar character. The human frame is made up of material particles identical in kind with those which compose the bodies of the brutes that perish, and the difference of organization is in virtue of the different vital principles which energize from within. Man was created in the image of his God; but if he subordinates the spiritual to the animal part of his nature, does it not stand to reason that the development of his character will be in a brutish direction, and that the image of Christ will be changed into that of the sin to which he clung during the period of his probation, and which now clings to him like the poisoned shirt of Nessus? Death does not break the continuity of human life; it merely disengages the man's true self from the restraints and environments of this world, and reveals him just as he is—transformed into the image of his Saviour or into that of the Fiend. Thus viewed old age is very instructive. As the bodily functions decay and the intellectual powers become relaxed, the genuine character of the man begins to show itself, and we behold either the moroseness and peevishness of matured selfishness, no longer kept in check by the artificial restraints of a calculating prudence; or, on the other hand, the glory

of the immortal life reflected on silver hairs, and lighting up the countenance with a serene beauty and a benign cheerfulness which are not of this earth.

This is, in fact, the true import of the Greek word (κρίσις) which is sometimes translated "judgment," and sometimes "damnation," in our English Version. It really means a separation or division, and would not be inappropriately translated by its English equivalent, *crisis*. What do we mean by a crisis? Do we not mean the arrival of antagonistic elements at such a pass that a separation is imminent, and one or other must triumph? A fever has reached its crisis when the principle of life and the principle of decay are face to face and one of them is about to obtain the mastery. A debate in Parliament has reached its crisis when the *division* takes place, and the members file off to the right hand and to the left of the presiding judge, each following out to their legitimate results the principles which have ruled his political conduct. And what is the "judgment" (κρίσις) of the Last Day but the crisis of humanity, the final separation of the antagonistic elements of moral good and moral evil?

But many persons may have no difficulty in allowing that moral depravity can have these terrible conse-

quences, and yet rebel against the notion of depravity in matters of faith having similar consequences. They can understand that an habitual offender against the moral law may "perish everlastingly," but not an habitual offender against revealed truth. Does the Athanasian Creed really mean that a heretic shall perish everlastingly? Undoubtedly. But we must distinguish. In the first place, to say that a heretic shall perish everlastingly is a very different thing from saying that any particular heretic shall perish everlastingly. In the one case perdition is predicated of a character, in another of a person. If I say that an Arian shall perish everlastingly, I pass judgment in the abstract on a particular form of theological belief. If I say that Arius has perished everlastingly, I pass judgment on an individual; which is quite a different matter. Does this seem to any one a distinction without a difference? Let us test it. "Whosoever hateth his brother without a cause," says "the disciple whom Jesus loved," "is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him."[1] Again: "The fearful" (*i.e.* moral cowards), "and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and

[1] 1 John iii. 15.

brimstone: which is the second death." "Without" (the heavenly city) "are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." [1]

Passages of similar import might be quoted from St. Peter and St. Paul. Are we to understand that no individual murderer, or liar, or idolater, and so forth, can be saved? No one would say so. It is the murderer, or liar, or idolater *as such*, who is excluded from heaven, not the particular offender, who may have repented and made himself fit for heaven. Man is a complex being, and we can never be sure that any specific offence against faith or morals is a true index to his character as a whole. It is the key in which the thoughts habitually move that determines the condition of man as a responsible moral agent, and God alone, Who sees the heart, can know for certain what that key is. So much of error in faith and morals comes from a man's environment, his hereditary tendencies, invincible prejudices arising from circumstances beyond his control, the repellent and even, it may be, misleading form in which the truth was presented to his mind, that the degree of guilt must vary indefinitely; and therefore we cannot say of any particular sinner that he shall perish ever-

[1] Rev. xxi. 8; xxii. 15.

lastingly. The sum total of man's capacities for everlasting life are not necessarily exhausted by the few gross acts incident to social relations or open to human valuation. But it is on such acts alone that human judgments can be passed either in the sphere of faith or morals. Neither a murderer, nor liar, nor heretic can enter heaven. But it is the murderous, or lying, or heretical disposition which excludes, not the gross act done, perhaps, in a moment of sudden temptation or in consequence of inherited proclivities or other extenuating circumstances.

But let us clearly understand what is meant by heresy. Literally, it means a deliberate choice; theologically, the deliberate choice of error in preference to truth. No one, therefore, is formally a heretic who errs unwillingly—that is, through ignorance. But is wilful and deliberate heresy a possible state of mind? "It may be safely affirmed," says the late Dean Stanley, "that in the only sense in which these words can have any meaning no one ever did or ever can 'wilfully reject the Catholic Faith.'"[1] With equal plausibility Socrates maintained that no one could be wilfully vicious. And undoubtedly that opinion has an element of truth in it. For "if a perfectly clear intellectual conviction of the goodness

[1] *The Athanasian Creed*, pp. 94, 95.

of the end and of the necessity of the means is present to a man, he cannot act otherwise than right."[1] So, too, it may be said that if a man has a perfectly clear intellectual apprehension of the truth, and also a clear conviction of the necessity of embracing it, it is morally impossible that he should reject it. But, in both cases, the man may have incapacitated himself for this clear apprehension and conviction by a previous course of misconduct; and therefore he is guilty of wilfully rejecting virtue or truth, though at the moment of rejection he may be unaware of what he is doing. Aristotle points out very clearly the difference between acting *ignorantly* and acting *because of ignorance*.[2] When a man kills his fellow in a fit of drunkenness he is rightly indicted for murder, because, though ignorant of what he was doing at the time, he was the cause of his own ignorance by getting drunk, and was therefore responsible for all that followed from the initial sin. Merope, on the other hand, slew her son through ignorance for which she was in no way accountable, and was therefore blameless. It is awful to think of the way in which destiny may thus be fixed irrevocably, for nations and for individuals, by what men ignorantly term trifles.

[1] Sir A. Grant's Edition of *Aristotle's Ethics*, p. 125.

[2] *Ethics*, bk. iii. c. i. § 14–16.

In the conflict of virtue and vice, truth and falsehood, all may be doubtful up to a certain point; then a crisis is reached when a deliberate choice is made of the wrong course, and the man or nation "finds no place of repentance" afterwards, though "sought carefully with tears." There is "a great gulf fixed" which cannot be passed.

"Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide,
In the strife of truth with falsehood, for the good or evil side:
Some great cause, God's new Messiah, offering each the bloom or blight,
Parts the goats upon the left hand and the sheep upon the right;
And the choice goes by for ever 'twixt that darkness and that light."

But true as this is in the abstract, who shall dare say it of any one in particular? I repeat that no one is formally a heretic who has not deliberately chosen error in preference to truth; in other words, whose ignorance of the truth is not self-caused. The so-called "damnatory clauses" of the Athanasian Creed are thus applicable to Christians only, and among Christians, to those only who wilfully reject the truth. And we may say, finally, that both as regards faith and morals, no one "shall perish everlastingly" whom Omnipotent Love can save. "For we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again; neither doth God respect any person: yet doth He devise

means, that His banished be not expelled from Him."[1] It may be asserted positively that every human being will eventually be as happy as his or her own constitution will allow.

"And this is life eternal, that they should know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent." "Life eternal"! "Here we have no continuing city." Above, below, around, on sky and land and sea, we behold everywhere the tokens and evidence of change and dissolution. Nature is now very beautiful in her summer robe;[2] but it is a fleeting beauty, ere long to be succeeded by beauty of another kind—the pathetic beauty of decay. The hectic flush of consumption will soon be on the leaves, and the trees, which are now decked in all their glory of foliage, will be swinging their leafless branches in the breeze like parents bereaved of their children. And is this to go on for ever? Is there no world where the worm never gnaws at the root of the rose, where the yellowness of decay never comes upon the woods and there is no winter to destroy the promise of spring and the splendour of summer? Yes, there is a "life eternal" reserved for those who are faithful

[1] 2 Sam. xiv. 14.

[2] This Lecture was delivered in substance in Ripon Cathedral, in June, 1887.

in this world of fleeting shadows and homeless affections; a life where they shall no longer see "through a glass darkly," but "face to face," according to the promise, "Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty; they shall look upon the land that is very far off," not in distance of space, but in man's capacity to behold it.

THE UNSEEN UNIVERSE, OR PHYSICAL SPECULATIONS ON A FUTURE STATE. Third Edition. London: Macmillan, 1875.

THE rapid sale of this book proves at least the interest which it has excited, and an examination of its contents fully justifies the favour with which it has been received.

It is, in fact, a masterly retort, from a purely scientific point of view, upon the assaults commonly made on Christianity from the standpoint of a materialistic philosophy. It is not an attempt to prove that Christianity is true, but an argument to demonstrate that the ordinary objections made to it on the ground of its being inconsistent with physical science have in reality no scientific basis to support them; that, in short, the Christian Revelation, freed from the traditions of many of its professors, whether true or not on other grounds, so far from being in conflict with physical science, is in truth in wonderful harmony with its most recent conclusions. It is no longer a secret that the work is

the joint production of two of the most eminent physicists in the United Kingdom; and it is also no secret, we believe, that it has passed under the supervision of some other men of science, one of whom, at least, stands without a rival among original thinkers and investigators in his own field of physical science. It is a book, therefore, which scientific men cannot afford to put aside with a few supercilious sneers.

One of them, indeed, with the confidence of youthful ardour, has essayed such a task in the pages of the *Fortnightly Review*. Being a man of great, though unbalanced, intellectual power, the authors have paid him the compliment, in the Preface to their second edition, of laughing him out of court in some admirably humorous remarks on his burlesque attack. "He appears," they say, "to be unable to conceive the possibility of a spiritual body which shall not die with the natural body. Or rather, he conceives that he is in a position to assert, from his knowledge of the universe, that such a thing cannot be. We join issue with him at once, for the depth of our ignorance with regard to the unseen universe forbids us to come to any such conclusion with regard to a possible spiritual body."

In another place, the critic (Professor Clifford) ridiculed the story of the sun going down upon

"Gideon," and here is the good-humoured way in which the authors of *The Unseen Universe* condescend to answer their assailant. "How the sun could go down upon 'Gideon' is not obvious. Had it done so it would certainly have occasioned personal inconvenience (to say the least) to that hero. But what's in a name? Our critic was evidently thinking of Joshua and 'Gibeon,' and why should a critic care about the difference between Amorites and Amalekites? It is a mere matter of spelling—a trifle. Similar mistakes in a previous article are apologized for in a foot-note appended to that on *The Unseen Universe.* Probably the author designed the apology to extend to it also, but forgot to say so; again a trifle. But it is of straws, some even weaker than these, that the imposing article is built; so that when we come forth to battle we find nothing to reply to." But it is time to give some idea of the contents of the book. It opens with a succinct statement of the tendency of physical research to shake, in a certain class of minds, belief in the immortality of the soul. Belief in the existence of the soul after death has indeed ever been, under various phases, the prevalent doctrine of mankind. Unbelievers in the doctrine have always been, numerically, an insignificant minority; but the

authors admit that "the strength of this minority has of late years greatly increased, until at the present moment it numbers in its ranks not a few of the most intelligent, the most earnest, and the most virtuous of men." They think, however, that, "could we examine these, we should find them to be unwilling unbelievers, compelled by the working of their intellects to abandon the desire of their hearts, only after many struggles and much bitterness of spirit." Others, again, without going so far as to deny the perpetuation of man's individual life beyond the grave, are full of doubt and painful despondency, being anxious to believe, yet unable to find any stable ground for their faith.

"It is the object of the present volume," the authors say, "to examine the intellectual process that has brought about these results, and we hope to show that the conclusion at which these men have arrived is not only not justified by what we know of the physical universe, but that, on the other hand, there are many lines of thought which point very strongly towards an opposite conclusion."

From this statement of the object of the book the authors pass on to a rapid review of the views held by mankind touching the life beyond death till the dawn of Christianity upon the field of human specu-

lation. Our Lord—we are condensing the statement of the authors—impressed upon His hearers a distinct belief in a future life which was to be enclosed in a bodily form. Addressing an ignorant multitude who could not make nice distinctions, He occasionally used language that seems to imply belief in the resurrection of the material particles which are laid in the grave and scattered in space. But that this kind of language was "economical"—that is to say, the nearest approach to the truth of which the rude minds of the multitude were capable—is proved by His answer to the captious objection of the cultivated Sadducees. Men in the future life, He said, will be "like the angels" (ἰσάγγελοι), whose bodies certainly are not formed of the materials of which mortal human bodies consist. And St. Paul gives greater emphasis still to the difference between the present human body and its future development, when he says distinctly that the body which is laid in the grave is not "that body that shall be." The two are, indeed, identical; but it is an identity of *form* (we mean the word in its philosophical sense), not of material particles.

Another peculiarity of the Christian Revelation of which the authors take note is the especial emphasis which the New Testament gives to the perishable nature of the visible creation. It is represented as

something temporal and transitory, while the unseen universe, on the other hand, is eternal.

From this point the authors pass on to discuss the various theories held at different times as to the constitution and destiny of the visible universe. It is impossible, however, to offer anything like a summary of the discussion. It is very clear and able, and shows a complete mastery of the subject; but it is in parts too abstruse for the general reader, and is altogether so dovetailed together that it is impossible to give any idea of the argument by separate quotations. We must, therefore, send our readers to the book itself, merely observing that the authors assume, "as absolutely self-evident, the existence of a Deity Who is the Creator of all things;" and that they "look upon the laws of the universe as those laws according to which the beings in the universe are conditioned by the Governor thereof, as regards time, place, and sensation."

But what do we mean by creation? Any addition to, or subtraction from, the sum total of existence are ideas which are to the human mind metaphysically inconceivable. The difficulty is stated by Sir W. Hamilton (lect. on *Met. II.*, p. 405) as follows:—

"We are unable to construe it in thought, that there can be an atom absolutely added to, or an

atom absolutely taken away from, existence in general. Make the experiment. Form to yourselves a notion of the universe; now can you conceive that the quantity of existence, of which the universe is the sum, is either amplified or diminished? You can conceive the creation of a world as lightly as you can conceive the creation of an atom. And what is creation? It is not the springing of nothing into something. Far from it. It is conceived, and is by us conceivable, merely as the evolution of a new form of existence by the fiat of the Deity. Let us suppose the crisis of creation. Can we realize it to ourselves, in thought, that the moment after the universe came into manifested being there was a larger complement of existence in the universe and its Author together than there was the moment before in the Deity Himself alone?"

The authors of *The Unseen Universe* state their view of the matter as follows:—

"As far as we can judge, the visible universe—the universe of worlds—is not eternal, while however the invisible universe, or that which we may for illustration at least associate with the ethereal medium, is necessarily eternal. The visible universe must have had its origin in time, no doubt from a nebulous condition. But in this condition it can hardly have been

fit for the reception of life. Life must therefore have been created afterwards. We have thus at least two separate creations, both taking place in time—the one of matter, and the other of life. And even if it were possible, which it is not, to get over one of the difficulties attending this hypothesis, that of creation in time, by regarding the visible universe as eternal; yet even then we must regard matter and life as implying two separate creative acts, if we assume the nebulous hypothesis to be true."

The materialists are thus in a dilemma. Committed to the doctrine of continuity, they come at last upon two breaks in that doctrine—the creation of the physical universe and the apparition of life upon its surface. It is impossible, within our limits, to condense in an intelligible manner the argument by which the authors seek to demonstrate that "the visible universe must have had its origin in time," and must ultimately pass away and be absorbed in the unseen. But the difficulty of reconciling, on the materialistic hypothesis, the origin of life with the doctrine of continuity is sufficiently apparent. Professor Helmholtz and Sir W. Thomson have attempted to get over the difficulty by suggesting meteoric transmission of germs of life from one planet to another. But this is to evade the difficulty, not to

solve it. For whence came the primordial life-germ? To that question the apostles of materialism can give no answer. The authors of *The Unseen Universe* meet the difficulty by the hypothesis, supported by much subtlety of reasoning, that "the material as well as the life of the visible universe" have "been developed from the unseen, in which they had existed from eternity." This hypothesis, at all events, avoids collision with the doctrine of continuity, or any other well-established conclusion of physical science. The authors, in this respect more modest than many of their critics, do not claim for their view more authority than that of a highly probable hypothesis. They do not claim to have established it as a fact, but only to have shown that it is not inconsistent with any established fact in physical science, while, on the contrary, there is much in the constitution of the visible universe which points in the direction of their conclusion. But is that conclusion consistent with the teaching of Christianity? Some there are who appear to think that it is not. The cry of "Atheism" and "Pantheism" has been raised against the authors of *The Unseen Universe*, and they have been accused of denying the resurrection of the body, merely because they accept St. Paul's statement of that doctrine as set forth in 1 Cor. xv.

This latter charge, therefore, we may dismiss with the remark of Paley, that those are unconsciously among the most dangerous foes of Christianity who insist on making it answerable with its life for the truth of theories which in no sense belong to its essence, and which, in some cases, are entirely opposed to its spirit. But the charge of "Atheism" or "Pantheism"—which is but Atheism in a poetical vesture—is more plausible, and accordingly calls for a few words of criticism.

As a matter of fact, then, the authors of *The Unseen Universe* express their belief in the following doctrines, which are, in truth, in intimate connection with their argument:—

1. An eternal intelligent Deity, consisting of three Persons in one undivided substance: the first Person being "absolute" or "unconditioned" (*i.e.*, in the language of theology, the "fount of Deity"); the other two Persons being "conditioned" by their relation to the first Person on the one hand, and to the created universe on the other—the one as its developing Agent, "the other as the Lord and Giver of Life."

2. The Incarnation of the second Person of the Trinity, His Resurrection and Ascension.

3. The existence of angels and their operations in the realm of nature.

These are doctrines which are openly asserted in *The Unseen Universe.* When therefore the authors are accused of Pantheism, the meaning must be that their argument involves that conclusion because it postulates, in some sense, the eternity, not of the universe of visible matter and fleeting phenomena, but of an unseen universe. But the objectors have evidently not considered what their accusation implies. Let us endeavour to point it out to them. How do they realize to their own minds the existence of God prior to the creation of the visible universe? Do they not think of Him as existing in eternal light? And does not St. Paul tell us that He is a Being Who has existed from eternity "in unapproachable light"? Have they never heard, moreover, of the Λόγος ἐνδιάθετος and the Λόγος προφορικός? And do they know what these terms mean? "The terms were received into the Church," says Dr. Newman (*Arians*, p. 214); "the ἐνδιάθετος standing for the Word, as hid from everlasting in the bosom of the Father, while the προφορικός was the Son sent forth into the world, in apparent separation from God." But there must have been a world in some sense, some unseen universe, for the Son to be "sent forth into" it "in apparent separation from God." And this is precisely the doctrine of *The Unseen Universe.* The authors

hold that there is an eternal ethereal medium—St. Paul's "unapproachable light," in fact—into which the Son went forth to develop the cosmical universe, which the third Person of the Trinity endowed with life. The visible universe is thus a development out of the unseen, into which it will disappear again when its mission is fulfilled.

"If then we regard the universe from this point of view," the authors say at the end of their inquiry, "we are led to a scientific conception of it which is, we have seen, strikingly analogous to that system with which we are presented in the Christian religion. For not only are the nebulous beginning and fiery termination of the present visible universe indicated in the Christian records, but a constitution and power are assigned to the unseen universe strikingly analogous to those at which we may arrive by a legitimate scientific process." In other words, physical science points to an inevitable cataclysm of the visible universe. A constant dissipation of energy is going on which is gradually, however remotely, impelling the planets towards their suns and the suns towards each other. The result will be the absorption of the planets into the suns, the collision of the suns with each other, and the consequent fusion of the visible universe by "fervent heat," and its final reabsorption into the

realms of unseen but substantial realities. These are the prognostications of physical science as expounded by the accomplished authors of *The Unseen Universe*, and they are at the same time the predictions of Holy Writ. The coincidence is, to say the least, remarkable, and ought to suggest, alike to the students of Nature and of Revelation, the need of caution and patience when their respective utterances seem to disagree.

The truth is, those who denounce such speculations as are reverently put forth in *The Unseen Universe* merely prove themselves as ignorant of the theology of the question as they are of its philosophy. Leibnitz combined a competent knowledge of theology with an unsurpassed capacity for philosophical speculation, and those who have read his *Essais de Theodisée* or *Lettres à Bourguet* are aware that he has committed himself to conclusions in regard to creation, which go at least as far as those propounded in *The Unseen Universe*, as the following passage will show. Admitting that the universe no more had a commencement, in the sense of a creation literally out of nothing, than it will have an end, he denied that the universe is, therefore, "eternal as God." "God does not endure; He is. And this is eternity. The universe changes incessantly, aspiring, so to

speak, after absolute existence without ever attaining it. And this is time." Or if the great name of Leibnitz should be contemned by the critics who have accused the authors of *The Unseen Universe* of Pantheism, we will substitute for it a name which they profess to revere, though we have a shrewd suspicion that their acquaintance with his writings does not go beyond an occasional glimpse of them for purposes of controversy rather than for serious study. The author to whom we refer, while declining to dogmatize in a matter which properly belongs to the domain of open questions, gives it as his opinion that, "Since God has always been Sovereign Lord, He must always have had creatures over whom He exercised His sovereign authority." In a very subtle argument he contends that the creature has always existed, yet cannot be said to be co-eternal with the Creator. This seems to land him in a dilemma from which there is no escape. I quote the dilemma as stated by himself and his reply:—

"But if I make such a reply, it will be said to me, How, then, are they [the angels] not co-eternal with the Creator, if He and they have always been? How even can they be said to have been created if we are to understand that they have always existed? What shall we reply to this? Shall we say that both state-

ments are true?—that they always have been, since they have been in all time, they being created along with time, or time along with them, and yet that also they were created? For similarly we will not deny that time itself was created, though no one doubts that time has been in all time; for if it has not been in all time, then there was a time when there was no time; and who could be such a fool as to make such an assertion? For we can reasonably say there was a time when Rome was not; there was a time when Jerusalem was not; there was a time when Abraham was not; and so on. In fine, if the world was not made at the commencement of time, but after some time had elapsed, we can say there was a time when the world was not. But to say there was a time when time was not is as absurd as to say there was a man when there was no man; or, this world was when this world was not. But if we are speaking of different objects, that form of expression is allowable, as, there was another man when this man was not. Thus we can reasonably say there was another time when this time was not; but who could be such a simpleton as to say there was a time when there was no time? As, then, we say that time was created, though we also say that it has always been, since in all time time has been, so it does not follow that, if

the angels have always been, they were therefore not created. For we say that they have always been because they have been in all time; and we say that they have been in all time because time itself could in no wise have been without them. For when there is no creature whose changing movements admit of succession, there cannot be time at all. And consequently, even if they have always existed, they were created; nor, on the other hand, if they have always existed are they therefore co-eternal with the Creator. For He has always existed in unchangeable eternity; while they were created, and are said to have been always, because they have been in all time, time being impossible without the creature. But since time passes away by its changefulness, it cannot be co-eternal with changeless eternity. And consequently, though the immortality of the angels does not pass in time, does not become past as if now it were not, nor has a future as if it were not yet, still their movements, which are the basis of time, do pass from future to past; and therefore they cannot be co-eternal with the Creator, in Whose movement we cannot say that there has been that which now is not, or shall be that which is not yet. Wherefore, if God has always been Lord, He has always had creatures under His dominion—creatures, however, not begotten

of Him, but created by Him out of nothing; nor co-eternal with Him, for He was before them, though at no time without them, because He preceded them, not by lapse of time, but by His abiding eternity."[1]

It is in this reverent and liberal spirit that St. Augustine discusses the question handled so ably by the authors of *The Unseen Universe*, and they may be well content to lie under an imputation of heresy which would include the great doctor of the Western Church.

We have felt it necessary to make these remarks because we are anxious that Church principles should not be discredited by alliance with crude and untenable dogmatism on questions which the Church has left open. She insists, indeed, on loyalty to her creed on the part of her children; but she has left outside of her *credenda* large tracts of debatable questions on which Churchmen may exercise the fullest measure of intellectual freedom compatible with loyalty to the articles of revealed truth; and we must protest against any enclosure of these intellectual commons, let the proposal come from what quarter it may.

[1] *De Civitate Dei*, lib. xii. c. 15.

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